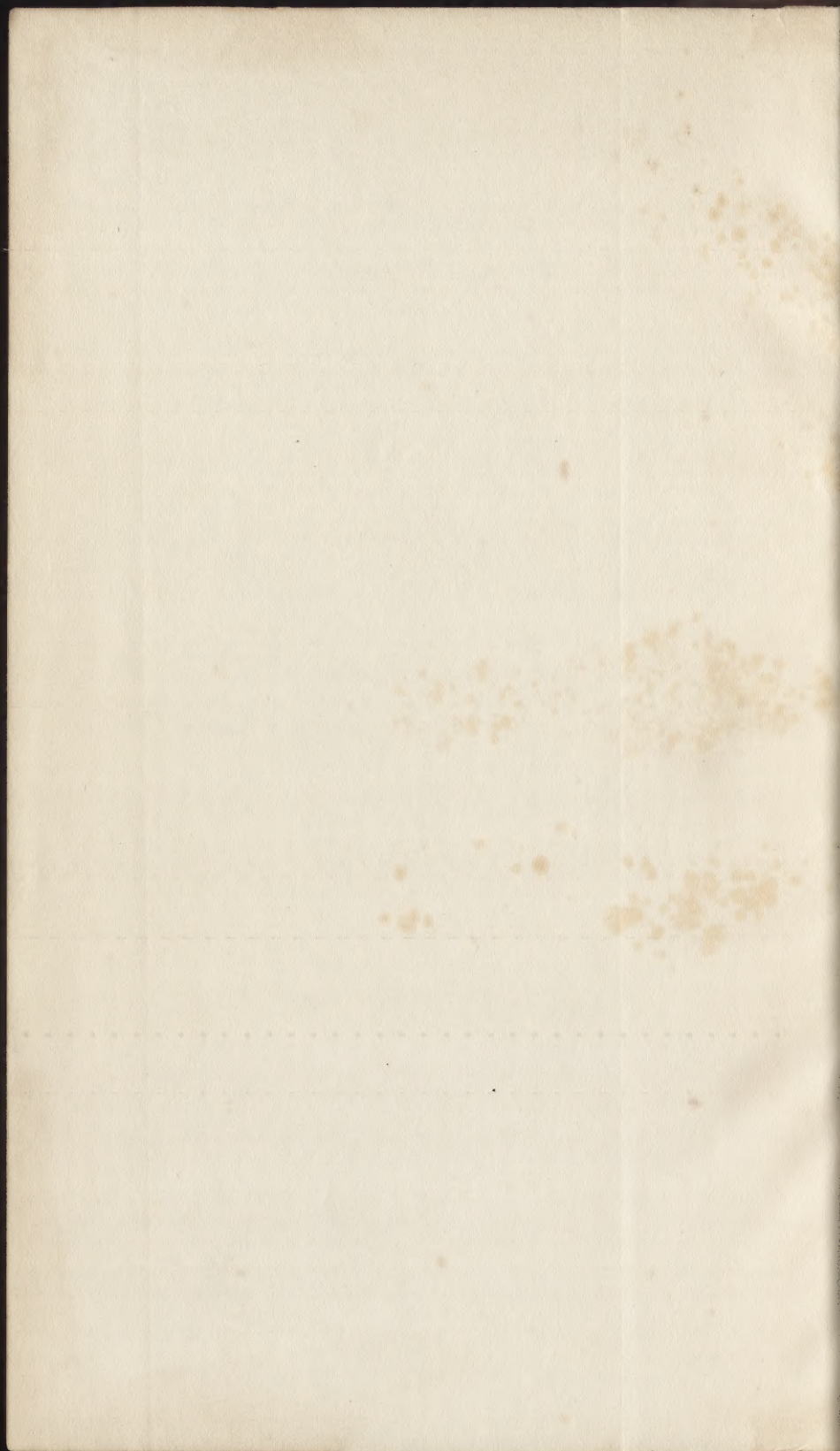
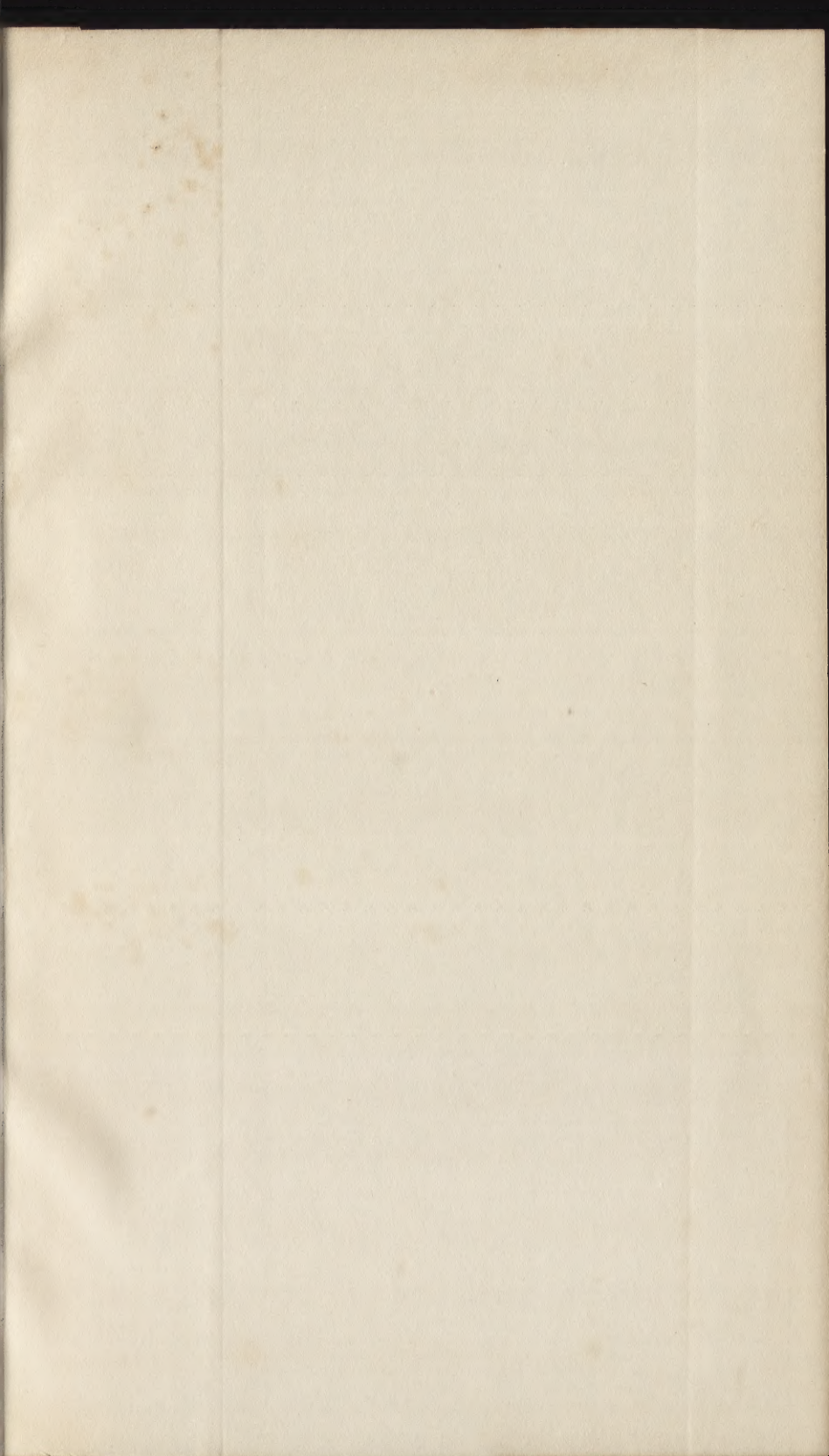
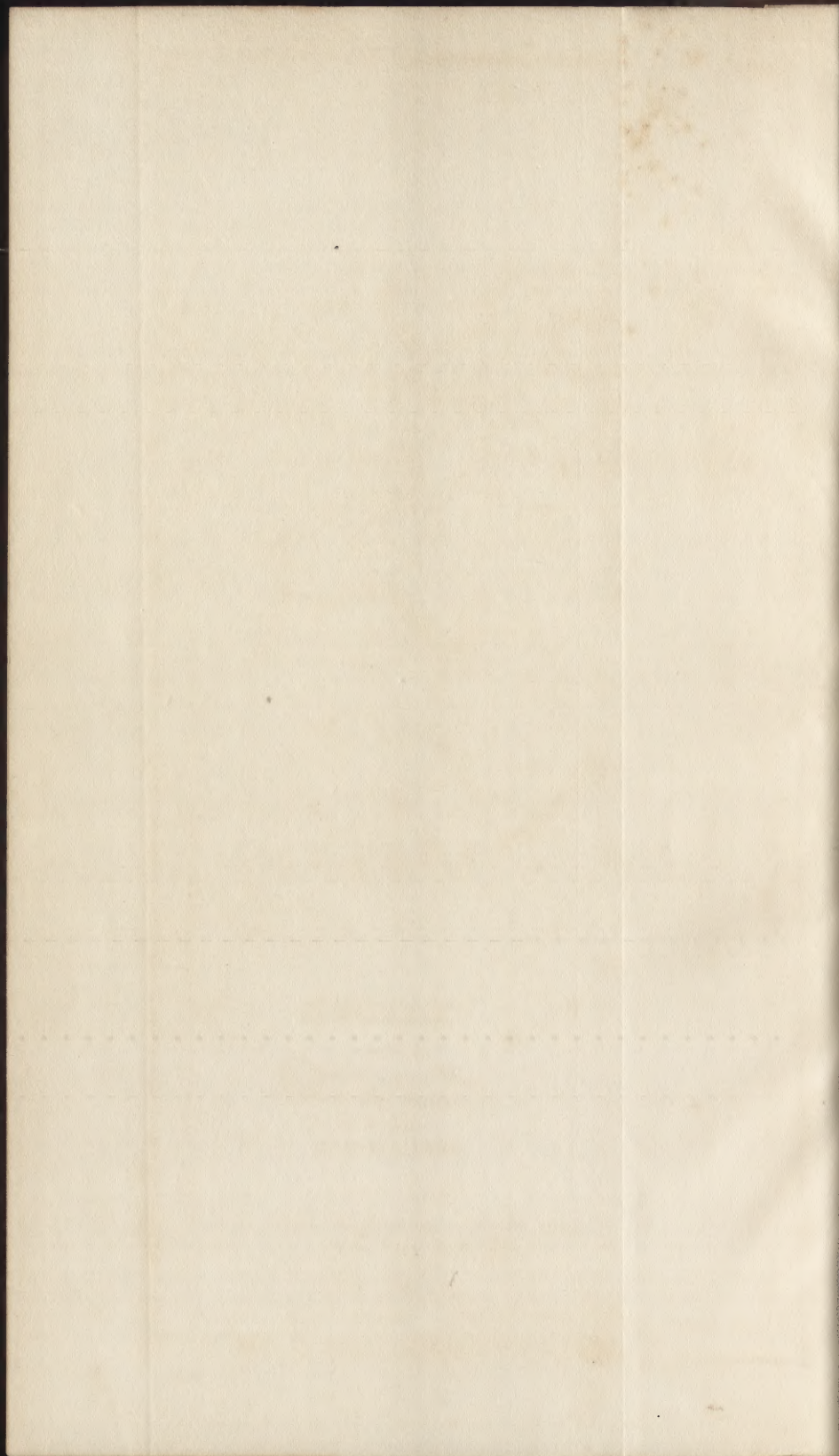


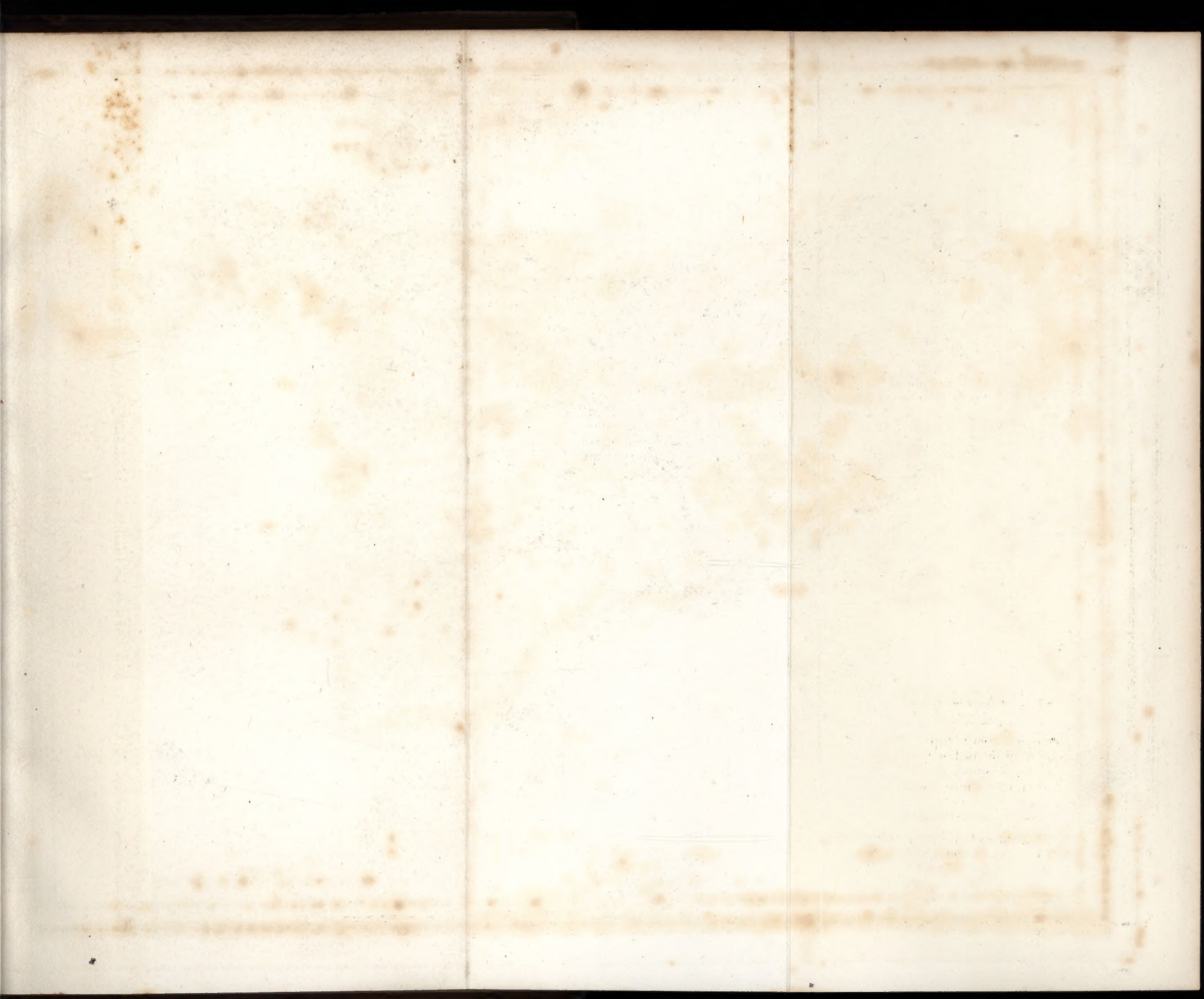


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A

TOUR THROUGH SICILY,

IN

THE YEAR 1815.

BY GEORGE RUSSELL,

OF HIS MAJESTY'S OFFICE OF WORKS.

Illustrated by a Map

AND

EIGHTEEN INTERESTING PLANS AND VIEWS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1819.

TOUR THROUGH SICILY

THE YEAR SIX

BY GEORGE B. WATTS

Illustrations by the Author

WITH AN INTERESTING TRAVEL AND VIEWS

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERRIN & SONS

DATE 1841

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

PREFACE.

“GRACIOUS HEAVEN! grant me but health, thou great bestower of it, and give me but this fair goddess as my companion; and shower down thy mitres, if it seems good unto thy divine providence, upon those heads which are aching for them.”

STERNE.

INDISPOSITION was the author's reason for leaving *England*, and visiting a foreign clime in search of that first of earthly blessings, HEALTH, so justly and emphatically desired in the above quotation. Proceeding, therefore, in the first place to *Lisbon*, and then to the *Mediterranean*; touching at *Alghesiras* in the bay of *Gibraltar*, and at *Port Mahon* in the island of *Minorca*, he ultimately disembarked at *Genoa*.

Thus finding himself upon the continent of *Italy*, and at every step treading classic ground, in

“ _____ il bel paese
Che *Appennin* parte, e il mar circonda, e l'*Alpe* *.”
PETRARCH.

he determined on visiting ROME: consequently, after viewing the splendid edifices and works of art which adorn the superb *Genoa*, he continued his route towards that city, passing, in his way, through those of *Florence* and *Sienna*.

Having at length reached imperial ROME, the once proud mistress of the world, he remained there several months, which he employed in examining with the utmost diligence and attention the *Colosseum*, the *Pantheon*, and the other splendid re-

* Which the *Apennines* divide, and the sea and *Alps* surround.

mains of antiquity, as well as the various museums and galleries, especially those inclosed within the *Capitol* and *Vatican*. He also devoted a considerable portion of time to that most stupendous building, the *Basilica* of *Saint Peter*, which certainly vies in extent, in richness of materials, and in beauty of proportion as well as harmony, with any edifice either of ancient or modern times.

The author conceives himself to have been extremely fortunate in forming, during his residence in this city, an acquaintance with *M. Fromm*, a gentleman high in the legal department of the duchy of *Mecklenburgh*, and who entertained the same intention as himself, namely, of proceeding to *Sicily* for the purpose of visiting the temples and other *Grecian* antiquities still existing in that celebrated region of poetry and fable.

Towards the end of the month of *March*, 1815, *M. Fromm* and the author made arrangements for quitting the *ETERNAL CITY*, when, on the morning of their departure, two *Prussian* gentlemen, *August Wilhelm Föerster*, Doctor of Laws of *Berlin*, and *August Wilhelm Kephhalides*, Doctor of Philosophy, and a Professor in the University of *Breslau* in *Silesia*, were introduced to them as having an intention of performing the same tour. No objection being made to thus increasing the party, of course no time was lost in settling some trifling matters, especially with respect to the language that should be used as the medium of communication, the author not understanding *German*, nor his companions *English*, at least not sufficiently for conversation. After some little discussion upon this subject, it was finally agreed to adopt the *Italian*, that being the language spoken in *Sicily*.

The tour comprised in the following sheets, besides being illustrated with a general map of *Sicily*, as well as with eighteen interesting plans and views, contains also a description of the volcano of *Macaluba*, *Castro Giovanni*, the ancient *Enna*, the lake of *Proserpine*, the valley of *Ispica*, and many other equally distinguished places, of which no account is given either by *Swinburne* or *Brydone*, in their respective works on this celebrated country.

Should this volume unfortunately fail in meeting with so favourable a reception as the subject unquestionably deserves, it must be attributed rather to the inexperience of the author in preparing it for the press than to a want of sufficient materials, as he conceives it to have been made under very favourable circumstances, particularly from his having been tolera-

bly conversant with the *Italian* language, by which he was enabled to enter into general conversation, and from his having previously devoted some months to the examination of *Roman* antiquities, whereby he was the better prepared for viewing those of *Grecian* construction; and above all, from his having joined company with gentlemen so eminently qualified for such an undertaking, especially with *M. Fromm*, from whom he received much useful information. He therefore ventures, without any farther preface, most respectfully to submit his work, the result of actual and attentive observation, to the consideration of an indulgent public; confident that, however little claim to merit it may have in other respects, it possesses at any rate the powerful recommendation of fidelity and truth.

London,
29 *January*, 1819.

CONTENTS.

	Page
CHAP. I.—Departure from <i>Rome</i> —Voyage from <i>Civita Vecchia</i> to <i>Sicily</i> - - - - -	1
CHAP. II.—General observations on <i>Sicily</i> , and its first inhabitants - - - - -	11
CHAP. III.—Of the illustrious and celebrated men who formerly flourished in <i>Sicily</i> - - - - -	18
CHAP. IV.— <i>Palermo</i> —The cathedral— <i>Marina</i> — <i>Flora</i> and botanical gardens—Theatres— <i>Improvvisatori</i> —Convent of <i>Capuchins</i> — <i>Saracenic</i> buildings— <i>La Bagaria</i> — <i>Monte Reale</i> — <i>Monte Pellegrino</i> — <i>Santa Rosalia</i> - - - - -	25
CHAP. V.— <i>Palermo</i> —Description of the ancient and modern city—Religion—Women—Literature—Climate - - - - -	41
CHAP. VI.— <i>Palermo</i> —Fête of <i>Santa Rosalia</i> - - - - -	51
CHAP. VII.— <i>Alcamo</i> —The ancient <i>Segeste</i> — <i>Salemi</i> — <i>Castro Vetrano</i> - - - - -	58
CHAP. VIII.—The ancient <i>Selinus</i> - - - - -	67
CHAP. IX.— <i>Sciacca</i> , the ancient <i>Thermæ Selinuntinæ</i> — <i>Porto Nuovo</i> of <i>Girgenti</i> - - - - -	74
CHAP. X.— <i>Girgenti</i> , the ancient <i>Agrigentum</i> —Description of the ancient and modern city—The cathedral—Temple of <i>Juno</i> —Temple of <i>Concord</i> —Sepulchral niches—Temple of <i>Esculapius</i> —Tomb of <i>Theron</i> —Temple of <i>Hercules</i> - - - - -	81
CHAP. XI.— <i>Girgenti</i> , the ancient <i>Agrigentum</i> —Tem-	

	Page
ple of <i>Jupiter Olympus</i> —Temple of <i>Castor</i> and <i>Pollux</i> —The <i>Piscina</i> —General observations respecting the population, situation, and manners	94
CHAP. XII.—The volcano of <i>Macaluba</i>	106
CHAP. XIII.— <i>Favara</i> — <i>Canigatti</i> — <i>Caltanissetta</i> — <i>Castro Giovanni</i> , the ancient <i>Enna</i>	111
CHAP. XIV.—Lake of <i>Proserpine</i> — <i>Piazza</i> — <i>Calatagirone</i> — <i>Modica</i>	122
CHAP. XV.—Valley of <i>Ispica</i> — <i>Noto</i>	133
CHAP. XVI.— <i>Syracusa</i> —General description of the ancient city by <i>Cicero</i> —Fountain of <i>Arethusa</i> —Temple of <i>Minerva</i> —Temple of <i>Diana</i> —Castle—Amphitheatre—Theatre	143
CHAP. XVII.— <i>Syracusa</i> —The <i>Latomie</i> —Ear of <i>Dionysius</i> — <i>Epipola</i> —Convent of <i>Capuchins</i> —Catacombs—Tomb of <i>Archimedes</i> —Temple of the Olympic <i>Jove</i>	158
CHAP. XVIII.— <i>Syracusa</i> —Museums of Natural History—Marine grottos— <i>Papyrus</i> plant—Fountain of <i>Cyane</i> —Population of the ancient and modern cities—Climate—Wines— <i>Cafe Nobile</i> —Women	174
CHAP. XIX.— <i>Catania</i> —Epitome of its history—General description—Cathedral—Ancient baths—Amphitheatre—Theatre—Odeum— <i>Biscari</i> Museum— <i>Benedictine</i> Convent—Population	191
CHAP. XX.— <i>Etna</i>	210
CHAP. XXI.— <i>Cyclopi</i> an Isles— <i>Jaci Reale</i>	236
CHAP. XXII.— <i>Taormina</i> , the ancient <i>Taurominium</i>	241
CHAP. XXIII.— <i>Messina</i> —Cathedral— <i>Piazza di San Giovanni di Malta</i> —Palace of the viceroy—General observations	250
CHAP. XXIV.— <i>Faro</i> of <i>Messina</i> — <i>Melazzo</i> —The <i>Æolian</i> or <i>Lipari</i> Isles—Bay of <i>Naples</i>	262

DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.

Map of <i>Sicily</i>	-	-	to face the title-page.	
View of the Temple of <i>Segeste</i>	-	-	to face page 63	
Topographical Plan of <i>Agrigentum</i>	-	-	-	82
View of the Lake of <i>Proserpine</i>	-	-	-	124
View in the Valley of <i>Ispica</i>	-	-	-	137
Topographical Plan of the ancient <i>Syracusa</i>	-	-	-	144
Plan of the Grotto, commonly called the Ear of <i>Dionysius</i> at <i>Syracusa</i>	-	-	-	160
View of the same Grotto	-	-	-	161
Plan of the Catacombs at <i>Syracusa</i>	-	-	-	166
View of the Temple of <i>Jupiter Olympus</i> , with the City of <i>Syracusa</i> in the Distance	-	-	-	172
Topographical Plan of the Vicinity of <i>Etna</i>	-	-	-	210
View of <i>Etna</i>	-	-	-	211
View of the <i>Cyclopi</i> an Isles	-	-	-	239
Plan of the ancient Theatre at <i>Taormina</i>	-	-	-	245
View of the Environs of <i>Taormina</i>	-	-	-	248
View of <i>Messina</i> and the Entrance to the <i>Faro</i> , with <i>Reggio</i> and the Coast of <i>Calabria</i>	-	-	-	255
Plan of the Port of <i>Messina</i>	-	-	-	256
Plan of the <i>Lipari</i> Isles	-	-	-	280
View of the Island of <i>Stromboli</i>	-	-	-	281



A T O U R

THROUGH

SICILY.

CHAPTER I.

*Departure from Rome—Voyage from Civita
Vecchia to Sicily.*

IN consequence of the approach of the *Neapolitan* army towards *Rome*, in the spring of the year 1815, and the subsequent entry of one of their generals, the greater part of the *English* and other foreigners, then residing in that city, immediately quitted, some proceeding to *Florence*, others to *Genoa*. His holiness the Pope, accompanied by the sacred college of Cardinals, also deemed it prudent to retire.

At this critical moment, when the sentiments of the then *Neapolitan* government were not

known, as to whether they would detain travellers as prisoners of war, the author, in conjunction with the *German* gentlemen mentioned in the preface, after settling preliminary regulations respecting an intended tour through *Sicily*, determined to leave *Rome*, and proceed with the utmost expedition to *Civita Vecchia*, and thence, if possible, to embark for *Palermo*.

We accordingly quitted *Rome* in the evening of Saturday, the 26th of March, in a carriage drawn by four mules; but, in consequence of the roads being in so extremely bad a state, we were no less than nine hours in traversing a distance of twenty-five miles. It was midnight therefore before we arrived at the *osteria*, or road-side public-house, where we halted and passed the night. This *osteria* is about midway between *Rome* and *Civita Vecchia*.

We remained at this uncomfortable hovel more for the purpose of refreshing our mules than for any advantage we could possibly expect to receive, as it presented such an unfavourable appearance. Even the way to the chamber destined for our reception laid through a large loft, occupied by more than forty wretched-

looking men, women, and children, reposing on straw. Having taken possession of the chamber, we conceived it prudent, previously to extinguishing the light, to examine it well; and, upon looking under the bed, we discovered a secret trap-door, evidently communicating with the stables below. This circumstance tended to create in our minds a considerable degree of suspicion, which we were wholly unable to dispel; we therefore refrained from going to bed, amusing ourselves by conversing about our intended tour, and *Sicily*.

We quitted this miserable abode at day-break, and passed through *Paolo*, *San Severo*, and *Marinello*, at which latter place we made our *colazione* or breakfast. We then continued our journey towards *Civita Vecchia*, where we arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon.

In consequence of the entry of the *Neapolitan* troops into the *Roman* territory, this town was declared in a state of siege; therefore the *padrone*, or master of the inn, as well as ourselves, were under the necessity of attending the governor, to obtain his sanction for remaining there during the night.

Civita Vecchia is situated about fifty miles to the W.N.W. of *Rome*; and the whole extent of country between these places presents an uniformly steril and uncultivated appearance, coinciding, in general, with the other parts of the celebrated *Campagna di Roma*, which had fallen under our observation: in fact, the very soil for miles round this once colossal city appears unceasingly to mourn the loss of its former greatness. The present town is well-built and strongly fortified, after designs from the masterly hand of *Michael Angelo Buonarrotti*, and is generally considered as possessing considerable strength. *Civita Vecchia* was the *Centum Cellæ* of antiquity, and many remains of its ancient mole and harbour still exist.

There being, at this time, only one vessel bound for our intended place of destination, *Palermo*, we of course lost no time in engaging a passage: this vessel, the *Mary of Poole*, was schooner-rigged, and of one hundred and thirty tons burthen. She had originally come from *Halifax* with a supply of salt fish, and was now destined for *Palermo* with a freight of charcoal; after discharging at this city, she was to proceed to *Trapani*, there to take in a cargo

of salt, with which she was ultimately to return to *Halifax*.

In order to ascertain the quantity of provisions necessary for our consumption, we made inquiry as to the time it generally took to perform the voyage from this place to *Palermo*, and the result was, that with a fair wind it required from forty to fifty hours. Being, however, fully aware of the various uncertainties attendant upon such excursions, we deemed it prudent to lay in sufficient for seven or eight days.

We accordingly embarked on board this vessel about six o'clock in the evening on Monday, the 28th of March, weighed anchor, and proceeded about fourteen miles along the coast towards *San Severo*, where we brought to, for the purpose of taking in our *compagnon de voyage*, the charcoal.

The little comforts, if we may so express ourselves, which are generally found in similar situations, were certainly very much restricted on board this vessel; and we suffered the greatest inconvenience, arising principally from

the limited extent of the cabin. In fact it did not exceed eight feet square, including the projections of the different lockers, and we were six in number, occupying this small space, which was not sufficiently capacious to enable all of us to lie down together.

As the *Mary* was to remain at her present station for two or three days, we bade her a temporary adieu, and landed once more on the steril *Roman* coast. We then proceeded to *Marinello*, and took up our quarters at the *osteria*, where we passed the night; and although the accommodation was far from good, yet it was nevertheless preferable to that of our diminutive cabin.

In our way to *Marinello* we passed over a considerable length of the ancient *Via Aurelia*; and we could but remark, that many parts of it appeared in almost as perfect a state as when originally constructed, seventeen centuries since. We likewise observed the ruins of two ancient *Roman* arches, which were evidently erected for the purpose of carrying this way across some small rivulets, which came from the neighbouring mountains.

We observed along this part of the coast several watch-towers, situated about seven miles apart, erected for the express purpose of accommodating a guard of a few soldiers, whose duty it is to warn the inhabitants when any *Algerine* or *Tunisian* vessel approaches the land. *Marinello* is one of the stations where a tower of this kind is erected ; and the circumstance of a suspicious vessel being seen hovering off the shore, during the evening we remained here, was the cause of the usual signal being made, by kindling a fire upon the top of it, which signal was immediately repeated by the adjoining towers.

After making our *colazione* on the succeeding morning, we quitted this place, and returned along the same *Via Aurelia*, to rejoin the *Mary* ; but upon ascertaining that she would not be ready to proceed to sea until the morrow, we immediately disembarked again, and walked along the beach, taking another direction towards *San Severo*. During the time we were thus strolling, we were accosted by two *gendarmes*, or armed police-officers, who were out upon the *qui vive*, and who very obligingly accompanied us two or three miles, that is to say, until they had satisfied themselves that we were

not enemies of the holy *Roman* state. In the course of this perambulation, we observed, near the shore, many remains of ancient watch-towers and fortresses.

After spending some few hours at *San Severo*, we returned to the *Mary*, but her loading not being yet completed, we determined to continue on *terra firma*, and therefore took up our quarters in a miserable hovel, belonging to the foreman of the *carbonari*, or charcoal-men, who were employed in freighting the vessel; and although we enjoyed, in this hovel, space enough to have lain down, yet we were prevented from getting any repose from being grievously tormented by fleas. The night was passed therefore in conversation, our worthy host occasionally amusing us by relating the different adventures which befel him in *Russia*, and of his having been attached to that division of the *French* cavalry which, at one period during that ever-memorable campaign, was stationed some miles in advance of *Moscow*. Here he stated that he was taken prisoner by the *Russians*, but in consequence of being an *Italian* he was leniently and kindly treated: and it was to this circumstance, which at the time

appeared so unfortunate, that he frankly confessed he stood indebted for his life.

The *Mary* being ready for sea on Thursday, the 31st of March, we re-embarked, weighed anchor, and made sail; but having a continuation of light breezes and contrary winds, we were kept beating about the *Mediterranean*, until Monday, the 10th of April.

During this voyage we experienced the greatest possible privations and inconveniences, arising chiefly from the charcoal being stowed to the height of four feet upon deck. This circumstance considerably abridged the little accustomed walk, and rendered our voyage very uncomfortable, inasmuch as we were almost suffocated by the small particles of this unpleasant cargo.

Not having calculated upon remaining so many days at sea, our stock of provisions of course failed, and we were obliged to apply to the master of the vessel for a supply of common black *Italian* ship biscuit. While, however, we were in this dilemma, we succeeded in catching two small turtles, which were immediately converted into something

resembling soup, and having been, strictly speaking, upon short allowance for some days, we enjoyed a most delicious and sumptuous repast.

We ultimately made *Sicily*, on the 10th of April, after an unpleasant passage of twelve days, near *Capo San Vito*: we then doubled *Capo di Gallo*, and *Monte Pellegrino*. The valley lying between those promontories appeared highly cultivated, and contained numerous villas and country-houses interspersed amid its beautiful and luxuriant foliage; even the mountains were covered with the *pistacchio* and olive. After passing *Monte Pellegrino*, we entered the harbour of *Palermo*, when we were visited by the officers of health, who were pleased immediately to order the *Mary* into that greatest of all *Mediterranean* miseries, *quarantine*, although she had come direct from so healthy a country as *Italy*.

CHAPTER II.

General Observations on Sicily and its first Inhabitants.

DURING our long detention at *sea* and in *quarantine*, we attentively employed ourselves in consulting the ancient historians, which we had procured previously to leaving *Rome*, in order more effectually to dispel that *ennui* which had taken possession of our minds. From these authentic sources, we derived considerable information respecting the former state of *Sicily*, an epitome of which, we conceive, may with propriety be inserted in this part of the work, and serve as an introduction to our subsequent description of this peculiarly interesting country.

Whether the most ancient traditions, or the most respectable historians of antiquity are examined, there appears no reason to doubt that *Sicily*, in former ages, was united to *Italy*. Such was the opinion entertained by *Pliny*, who says, “*Sicilia quondam Brutio agro cohærens*

“*interfuso mari avulsa :*” and we even find the same sentiment expressed in the works of the most celebrated poets. *Strabo* and *Diodorus* also mention that in their days, near two thousand years since, this fact was generally accredited, and then considered as of great antiquity.

This celebrated island is the most considerable in the *Mediterranean*, and is situated between $36^{\circ} 33'$ and $38^{\circ} 18'$ N. latitude, and $12^{\circ} 12'$ and $15^{\circ} 50'$ E. longitude, at the southern extremity of *Italy*, from which country it is separated by the celebrated *Faro* or strait of *Messina*.

The form of *Sicily* is triangular, which circumstance, it is supposed, was the origin of its being called *Trinacria* by the ancients; and the extent, or rather its circumference, is upwards of six hundred miles.

Sicily is divided into three provinces, to which have been respectively assigned the name of valley: the first of these divisions, *il Val di Demoni*, contains many considerable cities, such as *Cefalu*, *Melazzo*, *Messina*, *Taormina*, and *Catania*, and likewise the terrific and

majestic *Etna* ; in the *Val di Noto*, we find *Castro Giovanni*, the ancient *Enna*, situated in the centre of the island, *Piazza*, *Noto*, *Leontini*, and *Syracusa* ; and in the *Val di Mazzara*, *Termini*, *Palermo* the capital, *Alcamo*, *Trapani*, *Marsala* the ancient *Lilybæum*, *Mazzara*, *Girgenti*, and *Alicata*.

There are few countries whose snrface presents a more rugged or unequal appearance. Besides *Etna*, which is not only one of the highest mountains, but also one of the most terrible volcanos in the known world, *Sicily* contains a great number of others ; in fact, whether traversing the *Val di Demoni*, or the *Val di Mazzara*, whether observing the country in the vicinity of *Messina* or of *Trapani*, every where there appear only lofty and insulated mountains.

Notwithstanding the fury and ravages with which *Etna* has so many times desolated *Sicily*, it cannot for a moment be doubted, that it is to this same volcano, and to the mineral and sulphureous waters existing in so many different parts, that the prodigious fertility of the island may principally be attributed.

Sicily has been always considered as a country most abundantly fertile. *Cicero* designates it with the flattering appellation of “the granary of ancient *Rome*.” *Diodorus* likewise, alluding to this great fertility, says, “that the country in the immediate neighbourhood of *Leontini* produced of itself corn without any sort of culture;” and even at the present day, although much less cultivated than formerly, it is certain that no other country can be compared with it, in respect to this peculiar quality.

This astonishing fruitfulness extends itself through all the various productions of nature, and even the fruits are in great abundance, and extremely delicious. We likewise know that the honey of *Hybla* was much celebrated by the ancients; and as to the excellence of its wines, the territories of *Syracusa* and *Messina* have at all times enjoyed the highest reputation. We learn from *Pliny*, upon the subject of wines, that the *Roman* emperors had a custom of introducing in their *fêtes* the four most superior kinds; these were the *Falernian*, produced near *Naples*, the *Greek* wines of the islands of *Chios* and *Lesbos*, and that called

Mamertinum, from the immediate vicinity of *Messina*.

Independently of oil and the different species of salt, marine as well as rock and medicinal, the sugar-plant, which is a native of far more distant isles, arrives also at perfection in this highly-favoured country.

Sicily has furnished, and, as it were, lent to the imagination of the poets and historians of antiquity more incidents than any other country. It was considered the cradle of all their fables; and the neighbouring *Faro* of *Messina*, the gulf of *Charybdis*, the rocks of *Scylla*, and the *Eolian* or *Lipari Isles*, all appendages to this famed island, have not been less the subject for the exertion of classic talent.

The origin of the first people who inhabited *Sicily* loses itself in the night of time: even the ancient authors entertained different opinions, some conducting them from *Spain*, others from *Italy*; while the poets, entertaining a partiality for the marvellous, speak of *Giants*, *Lestrigons*, and *Cyclops*.

Although we do not place implicit faith in the relations made by several historians as to discoveries in this country of ancient tombs, in which were skeletons near twenty feet in length, yet we cannot for a moment doubt, that in the primitive ages there were among men, as among animals, nations and individuals infinitely stronger, more robust, and of much greater stature than the present race of mankind.

Referring to the most accredited historians of antiquity, we learn that the *Sicani* from *Spain*, and afterward the *Siculi* from *Italy*, were among the first people who inhabited *Sicily*: this latter nation came and established themselves about the year 1364, B. C.

From this epoch various other nations came successively into *Sicily*. The *Phenicians*, whom we may regard as the most ancient commercial nation, established themselves upon the coast; and then followed the *Trojans*, after the destruction of their celebrated *Troy*.

The *Greeks*, likewise, sensible of the great advantage this island possessed, were attracted,

and founded *Naxos* and *Syracusa*. In the course of time, the inhabitants of those cities established *Selinus*, *Catania*, and *Leontini*. We then find that a colony of *Rhodians* and *Cretans* made their appearance, and erected a city near the *Gela*, which they named after the river, and in the end these same inhabitants founded the city of *Agrigentum*.

Messina was originally called *Zancle*, as we suppose from the peculiar form of its harbour. *Strabo* and *Thucydides* consider this city as one of the most ancient in *Sicily*, and state that it was founded by pirates from *Cuma*: these robbers were, however, eventually dispossessed by a colony from *Peloponnesus*, who changed its name to *Messena*.

With respect to the origin of *Palermo*, the present capital of *Sicily*, it is almost impossible to form any opinion, the accounts concerning it being so widely different; some attributing it to the *Phenicians*, while others, with more probability, ascribe it to the *Greeks*, its ancient name being *Panormos*.

CHAPTER III.

*Of the illustrious and celebrated Men who
formerly flourished in Sicily.*

IN ancient times few countries were more fruitful in producing great men than *Sicily*, and whether this event may be attributed to the *Greeks*, who always introduced a taste for the arts and sciences, or whether to that serene and lovely sky which envelopes this charming island, or the sweet and temperate climate it invariably enjoys, it is, nevertheless, certain, that it possessed a considerable number of men celebrated in all the sciences. Poets, philosophers, historians, and orators existed at the same time, and every *Sicilian* city seemed almost to dispute the palm with *Greece* herself. Poetry, especially, appears to have been cultivated with great success.

It was in *Sicily*, as we learn, that pastoral poetry took its rise, and it is natural to suppose, that in a country so luxuriant and fertile, in a country where the principal riches consisted in flocks and herds, those compositions which sung the labours and pleasures

of a rural life should be greatly encouraged, and more enjoyed than any other kind. *Theocritus* and *Moschus*, both natives of *Syracusa*, have generally been considered not only the first writers, but by far the most delightful in this peculiar style. Even *Virgil*, speaking of *Theocritus*, calls him his master: this expression alone may certainly be regarded as offering the highest tribute of praise; and in a word, the *Idylliums* of this poet are truly chaste, elegant, and enchanting.

Independently of the illustrious men who have, from time to time, flourished in *Sicily*, it seems as if even those of *Greece* entertained a predilection for the island, since we learn that *Plato*, and many other equally celebrated characters of antiquity, occasionally visited, and that *Xenophon* and *Zeno* finished their days, in this interesting country.

While upon this subject, we cannot refrain from observing, that it was under the reign of *Dionysius* that *Sicily* abounded in learned men. This tyrant*, born with great and extraor-

* Tyrant, introduced in the writings of ancient authors, is synonymous with the person exercising supreme authority.

dinary talents, and constantly praised and flattered by the literary characters whom he had attracted to his court, had the vanity to fancy himself the first poet of the day: one alone, *Philoxenus*, had the courage not to follow this example, and dared to avow the truth in the plainest and most decisive manner.

This *Philoxenus*, according to *Diodorus* one of the most excellent poets of the time, being invited to the table of the tyrant, was requested to give his opinion upon some verses recited during the repast. The poet, not finding them agreeable to true taste, criticised them severely. This unexpected circumstance so enraged *Dionysius*, that he immediately ordered the critic to be conveyed to one of the *Latomixæ*, or prisons of *Syracusa*.

However, in the course of time, the friends of *Philoxenus* obtained his release, and *Dionysius* invited him to his table a second time, naturally supposing that the recollection of the *Latomixæ* would have the effect of making him more complaisant. During this entertainment, some new verses, which were considered by the courtiers of the tyrant as the very *acmè* of perfection, being recited, all eyes anxiously regarded

Philoxenus, expecting to hear his opinion, when, to their great surprise, turning himself round to the guards who were in attendance, he simply said, "Reconduct me to the *Latomix*." The apparent *sang-froid* with which this pointed satire was delivered so pleased *Dionysius*, that he was the first to smile, and from that period conceived the greatest friendship for the poet.

The philosopher *Dion*, whom pagan antiquity placed in the number of her sages, lived at the court of *Dionysius*, and although born with a mind that soared far above this world, and endued with great natural abilities, he nevertheless confessed that he owed much to the instruction he had received from his master, the divine *Plato*. The desire for virtue which that great philosopher had instilled into the mind of *Dion* led him to imagine that similar instruction would produce the same effect, and make the same impression, upon the heart of *Dionysius*; he therefore exerted all his influence, and at last succeeded in inducing *Plato* to visit *Syracusa*. This austere philosopher, however, continued but a short period in *Sicily*, finding that all his endeavours to produce the laudable object of *Dion* were of no avail.

It was not till after *Sicily* had thrown off the yoke of the tyrants, and had adopted a republican government, that any celebrated orators appeared. It rarely happens, indeed, that under despotic monarchs such talents either receive encouragement, or find scope for exertion. It is in a country blessed with a constitution such as *England*, where the representatives of the nation make the laws and discuss all matters relative to its internal or external affairs, that an orator, who knows how to move and persuade, can expect to rise to a pre-eminent station in the service of the state, or receive those honours which a grateful nation always liberally bestows.

With respect to the numerous orators who have flourished in *Sicily*, we may certainly distinguish *Gorgias*, a native of *Leontium*, as occupying the most exalted station. Entrusted by his fellow citizens with the management of several important affairs, in which the talent to persuade was highly necessary, his eloquence was never suspended till success was attained; and at *Athens* especially, where he was deputed, in order to obtain assistance against the *Syracusans*, his oration was made in such a masterly style, that the *Athenians* not only consented to

grant his request, but also rendered the greatest honour to the orator, by erecting his statue, and designating it the *God of Eloquence*.

Sicily has not been less fortunate in historians. *Cicero* mentions *Philistus*, *Timæus*, and *Dicearchus*, as being highly celebrated, but unfortunately none of their writings have reached our time. The only *Sicilian* historian, whose works are in part extant, is *Diodorus*, a native of the ancient *Argyrium*. This great author was contemporary with *Cæsar* and *Augustus*, and after having travelled through the principal part of *Europe* and *Asia*, retired to *Rome*, where he passed thirty years in composing his famous work on universal history.

Among the almost infinite number of great and illustrious men, there is none more elevated than *Archimedes*, who was one of the first geometricians, and possessed a most extraordinary and fertile genius. This great man was born at *Syracusa*, and during the eventful siege of this city by the *Romans*, under the consul *Marcellus*, he rendered great assistance through the numerous stratagems he devised for prolonging its defence. In the end, however, he was unfortunately killed on the same day that

his native city lost her liberty, and became, as it were, blended with the colossal *Roman* empire.

The sciences and philosophy were not alone understood in *Sicily*; the different arts were equally as well cultivated. Independently of the beauty of the *Sicilian* medals, which are numerous, and in the best style, those ruins which yet exist of the various ancient temples and other edifices are more than sufficient to prove that architecture especially was carried to the highest perfection; and from what we glean from the writings of ancient authors, we have no doubt that the sister arts of sculpture and painting maintained their station in an equally pre-eminent degree.

CHAPTER IV.

PALERMO.

The Cathedral—Marina, Flora, and Botanical Gardens — Theatres — Improvisatori — Convent of Capuchins—Saracenic Buildings—La Bagaria—Monte Reale—Monte Pellegrino—Santa Rosalia.

WE remained under *quarantine* in the harbour of *Palermo* from Monday the 10th of April until the Saturday following, during which period we were twice obliged to attend the *lazzaretto* for the purpose of being examined by the medical men attached to the establishment.

The noble landscape which presented itself to our view, lying as we then did in this beautiful bay, comprehended within its ample range, not only the extensive and magnificent city of *Palermo*, but also the neighbouring plains, with numerous convents, villas,

and cottages romantically interspersed amid its luxuriant foliage. This splendid prospect is terminated by *Monte Pellegrino*, *Monte Reale*, and an amphitheatre of wild and majestic mountain scenery, extending as far easterly as *Capo Zaffarano*.

The morning of our release from imprisonment having arrived, we were permitted to disembark under the *espionage* of three *gendarmes*, who conveyed us before the magistrates assembled at their office of high police, when, after answering numerous questions put by the officers of justice, we were at last favoured by having our liberty restored. The first use we made of this inestimable blessing was to wait upon the *British* vice-consul, in order to pay the accustomed visit, and to inform him of the vexatious manner in which we had been treated: this ceremonious interview being concluded, we then proceeded to the hotel, *La Grande Bretagna*, in the *Piazza Marina*, where we resided during our continuance in *Palermo*.

The first object that attracted our attention in this truly beautiful city was the *Chiesa Madre*, or the cathedral, situated in the principal street, the *Cassaro*. This building was erected in the

twelfth century, and presents a most extraordinary appearance, being composed of the *Saracenic* and *Gothic* styles of architecture, injudiciously mixed together. The interior, although perfectly simple and plain, is enriched with several antique columns of granite. The remains of the Emperors *Henry* and *Frederic* are deposited within this sacred edifice in superb mausoleums of porphyry, which, in their form, greatly resemble that of *Agrippa* now in the church of *San Giovanni di Lateranno* at *Rome*: they also preserve in the cathedral an ancient *Grecian* portrait of the *Madonna*, painted on a ground-work of gold.

We likewise visited the church of *San Giuseppe*, also situated in the *Cassaro*: it is profusely and richly ornamented, and contains some extremely fine columns of grey *Sicilian* marble, nearly sixty feet high. In the subterraneous chapel attached to this sacred edifice, they preserve a *Grecian* portrait of the *Madonna*, of great antiquity: this painting is enriched with the most rare and valuable jewels, and is placed upon an altar of pure silver. We then viewed the other principal churches, and found they possessed the same splendid appearance, but without any regard to true taste;

in fact, the religious buildings of *Palermo* are much inferior to those in *Rome*, and many other cities of *Italy*.

We enjoyed the evenings, which are so extremely agreeable in a southern climate, by promenading the *Marina*, a raised public walk, lying next the charming bay of *Palermo*: this walk, upwards of a mile in length, and about eighty yards in breadth, is defended by a parapet wall breast high. From sunset until midnight, nay, often until two or three hours after, this promenade, and the adjoining public gardens, the *Flora*, become as it were the rendezvous of the whole city. In what terms we shall describe this *Flora*, we know not; the name itself implies much, but certainly, on this occasion, does not convey enough.

The still murmuring of the neighbouring sea, and the delightful breezes which invariably float during evening upon its surface—the continued warbling of the melodious nightingales, whose divine notes enliven this enchanting garden—the rich variety of aromatic shrubs and flowers, whose delicious essence is wafted by the gentle zephyr through the surrounding atmosphere—and more especially the

interesting and lovely *Sicilian* females who grace this charming *Flora*,—all united, tend to inspire those who visit this earthly paradise with more than mortal imaginings.

While enjoying the most pleasing reveries within the mazy labyrinths of this delightful garden, the beautiful lines in *Milton*, descriptive of “still evening” and the “wakeful nightingale,” came fully to our recollection, and we were almost inclined to fancy that the divine poet must have had some such delicious spot as the enchanting *Flora* in his inspired imagination, when he drew this pleasing picture :—

“ Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
“ Had in her sober livery all things clad ;
“ Silence accompanied : for beast and bird,
“ They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
“ Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale ;
“ She all night long her amorous descant sung.
“ Silence was pleased ; now glow'd the firmament
“ With living sapphires.”

The botanical garden, adjoining the *Flora*, is extremely fine, and affords a rich treat to the botanist. The entrance to this garden lies

through an elegant temple, erected in a chaste style, and strictly after the *Grecian Doric* in all its ancient purity. The garden contains an extensive collection of every plant that is rare and valuable, among which we observed several fine *banana*, pepper, and palm trees. The atmosphere of the island, during the greater part of the year, is so extremely mild and temperate, that the date, although a native of the sultry soil of *Africa*, nearly comes to perfection; such is the genial influence of this benign and happy region.

During our continuance in this city we visited the several theatres, which, generally speaking, are ill-constructed, and display little or no taste, either in their external or internal decorations; in fact they must not be compared with the present theatres of *Naples*, *Paris*, or *London*. The different performers, it is true, know how to represent the characters assigned to them, whether they have to pourtray the philosophic *Englishman*, the dignified *Spaniard*, the vivacious *Frenchman*, the playful *Italian*, or the sullen *German*; but we should in vain look for those abilities which are demanded to embody the lofty conceptions of a *Shakespeare* or

a *Dryden*. Neither must we expect to find a *Siddons*, an *O'Neill*, or a *Stephens*, on the stage of *Palermo*.

But in expressing our opinion respecting the stage, we must not forget to mention the *improvisatori*, a class of persons endued with considerable abilities, and possessing such a command of language, that they are enabled to return an extemporaneous answer in rhyme to any subject that may be proposed. In fact, the *improvisatori* of this city are nearly equal to those whom we had heard with so much gratification at *Rome*: they reply, not only with great facility, but with a splendour of ideas and images, conveyed in the most flowing rhymes, which are generally accompanied by music.

In the theatres of *Palermo*, as well as in the other foreign theatres which had come within the sphere of our observation, we found the military, fully armed and accoutred, as if prepared to meet an enemy in the field, invariably introduced in the audience part; for instance, in the principal theatre of this city, two grenadiers, with their huge caps, were stationed on the stage, in full view of the spectators, and,

what appeared more extraordinary, eight of the same gigantic men were placed in different parts of the pit. Thus much for the present state of *Sicilian* liberty.

The great object of attraction which draws so many persons to visit the *Capuchin* convent situated in the environs of *Palermo* is their *cimiterio*, or depository for the dead, wherein the fathers and brothers of the order, after their decease, are placed in rows, perfectly upright, their backs being supported against dwarf walls, erected for that purpose. They are habited in the same sort of dress they had been accustomed to wear during their natural life, and bear a ticket on their breast, which denotes the time of their decease, and likewise their age.

In this *cimiterio* we beheld, horribly exemplified by the varied appearances of more than five hundred human bodies, the grim tyrant death in all his different stages of decay, from the most perfect human, although cold and lifeless form, to, literally speaking, the mere skeleton. After the skeletons fall to pieces, the bones are carefully collected and symmetrically arranged against the walls, and the

teeth are set in a species of mosaic work, and form the front of the altar.

While contemplating this region of the dead, and expressing our surprise at the sight of so many human beings who once lived and moved, our *cicerone* placed his finger under the chin of one whose face we were then earnestly viewing, and raised the body from the ground, as though it had been of paper; so light had this withered emblem of mortality become. They also preserve the cranium of a King of *Tunis*, who died in the year 1620, and was interred according to the forms and ceremonies of this religious order. The present establishment of the convent consists of nearly two hundred and fifty fathers and brothers.

In the environs of *Palermo*, two *Arabian* or *Saracenic* buildings still exist, one of which, a castle named *Kuba*, has, however, been so much despoiled, that scarcely anything interesting now remains within its once magnificent walls: it has been latterly converted into a *caserne* or barracks for a regiment of cavalry.

The other building, known by the name of *Azziza*, is a beautiful specimen of *Arabian* architecture, and is kept in a state of good repair, being the summer residence of the present hereditary prince. It is built of hewn stone, and is almost wholly destitute of any exterior decoration or ornament. The entrance to this palace lies through an arched vault or *sala terrena*, lined with marble, in the midst of which is a fountain of water, constantly flowing into a large basin, whence it is conducted, by small canals, into the several apartments upon the ground floor: the walls and pavement of this *sala terrena*, as well as those of the palace generally, are decorated after the eastern or oriental fashion, with mosaic work and *Arabic* inscriptions. The roof of this charming building is flat, like those of the *Durazzo* and *Doria* palaces at *Genoa*; and like them too it is laid out as an artificial garden, ornamented with vases, statues, and fountains. From this summit we enjoyed a most splendid and magnificent view, not only of the sea and harbour, but also of the beautiful and enchanting city of *Palermo*.

During our abode here we made an excursion to *La Bagaria*, a village situated upon

an eminence near *Capo Zaffarano*, about ten miles to the eastward of *Palermo*.

After amusing ourselves for some time in walking about the delightful environs of this village, we obtained permission to enter the villa and gardens of the Prince of *Butera*; the latter were in a state of high cultivation, and presented a rich and luxuriant appearance. The strawberries were ripe, and the almond, apricot, and peach, were rapidly approaching towards a similar state: the orange-trees in particular were extremely beautiful, arising from the blended golden hue of the fruit, and the deep pomona green of the leaf, being so elegantly and so naturally intermingled.

In the pleasure-grounds attached to this charming villa, and in a situation as highly interesting as it is truly picturesque; we discovered a ruin fitted up in every particular to resemble a convent: the several figures introduced in the various cells were composed of wax, and nearly as large as life. Proceeding through this artificial convent we observed in one cell a good-looking friar, making a sumptuous repast, while in another, situated in a

more secluded part of the building, we found a young and beautiful nun, meditating over an edition of *Young's Night Thoughts*. In fact the *tout ensemble* was so well managed, that every thing connected with the interior arrangement of a religious institution, save the suspicious appearance of the young nun, was most completely exemplified.

We likewise obtained permission to view the villa of the Prince of *Pallogania*, which is rendered very conspicuous from the peculiar collection of statues, representing monsters of the human and brute species amassed together in the principal rooms, court-yards, and even avenues. Some of these statues are composed of the body of a man, terminated by the head of an animal; others, the body of one species, and the head of another. During our visit, we had the honour of being introduced to his Highness the Prince, who is much and deservedly esteemed in private life; but his style of dress rendered him almost as uncouth in appearance as many of his "dear and beloved" statues.

Fortunately the confused and obscure sensations excited by viewing these monstrous ob-

jects obliterates their remembrance almost the moment they are beheld; and leaves upon the mind only a vague idea of the strangest follies ever conceived by man. The subjects are gathered together without any apparent motive, and the unparalleled collection, consisting of nearly six hundred pieces, would be no less difficult to describe than they are certainly disagreeable to behold. We must not, however, quit this most extraordinary villa without mentioning one beauty which it undoubtedly possesses, and that is, the avenue forming the approach is lined on each side with the finest cypress-trees; this avenue is nearly half a mile in length, and is altogether a very pleasing object.

The hedges along the road, almost the whole way from *Palermo* to *La Bagaria*, are lined with the *cactus opuntia*, or prickly pear, and the aloe: many of the latter being in full blossom, were consequently seen to the greatest advantage.

We also made an excursion to *Monte Reale*, about four miles inland from *Palermo*. The road to this town, although very steep, is rendered easy of access, by its being carried in a

zigzag direction, supported by a strong external wall. The ever-varying series of views which present themselves in ascending and descending this mountain are truly splendid and beautiful ; even the very air is impregnated with a sweet and odoriferous fragrancy, arising from the numerous orange and lemon groves so delightfully interspersed in the plains immediately below.

The cathedral of *Monte Reale* was founded and erected by *William the Good*, in the twelfth century, and forms a curious monument of the riches, magnificence, and bad taste, which then predominated. The interior architecture of this extensive building consists of the *Saracenic* style, intermixed with the *Grecian* of the lower empire ; and which at the first *coup d'œil* certainly strikes the eye as majestic and imposing. The whole internal face is lined with mosaic, representing different subjects from the Old and New Testaments ; and although the designs are very indifferent, yet it deserves attention from the immensity of the labour it required : the pavement is also composed of mosaic work. They preserve within this sacred edifice, the tombs of *William the Bad*, and *William the Good*, and also part of the body of Saint *Louis*,

which our *cicerone* intimated was held in the greatest veneration. A considerable part of this cathedral now lies in ruins, occasioned by a fire, which happened some few years since.

Before we quitted *Palermo*, we made an excursion to *Monte Pellegrino*, the *Mons Ereto* of the ancients, in order to visit the shrine of *Santa Rosalia*, the protectress of the city, which is situated in a grotto upon the summit of this mountain. We found the ascent very steep and difficult, in many places it was almost perpendicular, and for the space of more than a mile, art had been obliged to lend her assistance in forming a road, in an irregular direction, similar to that which leads to *Monte Reale*.

History informs us, that *Santa Rosalia* was brought up at the court of King *Roger*, about the end of the eleventh century; but being suddenly seized with divine love, she quitted the court of this Prince, and retired into the hollows and caverns of the rocks, fully determined to pass the remainder of her days in absolute seclusion. Her first place of retirement was at *Monte Quesquina*, some di-

stance from *Palermo*, but ultimately she returned, and took up her abode in a humid cave, upon the summit of this mountain, now known by the appellation of the grotto of *Santa Rosalia*, where, at a very early period of life, she departed from the troubles and miseries of this sublunary world.

After traversing the summit of the mountain for some miles, we at length found ourselves before the grotto: we entered, and at its furthest extremity, beheld enshrined under a sacred altar, the image of the holy saint, with her head negligently reclining on one of her hands. The statue is of *bronzo dorato*, or bronze gilt, except the hands and head, which are of *Parian* marble; it is so well executed, and the general appearance so natural, that at the first sight it almost tempts the beholder to believe the saint living. *Santa Rosalia* holds in her other hand a cross, upon which she seems most profoundly meditating.

CHAPTER V.

PALERMO.

Description of the ancient and modern City—Religion—Women—Literature—Climate.

PALERMO, the *Panormos*, or *Panormus* of antiquity, might, in former times, have been almost considered an island, being surrounded on the east and west by a canal, and on the south by the river *Orethus*. On the other side of this river was the suburb called *Neapolis*, which was the part the *Romans* surrounded with a palisado, when they besieged, and finally wrested this city from the *Carthaginians* during the first Punic war. In the course of time the ancient inhabitants formed an interior port or harbour, by uniting the canal and river, by which the ships of those times came into the very heart of the city.

The valley surrounding *Palermo* is not only abundantly fertile, but richly cultivated: it was

formerly much praised on account of the number and beauty of the trees; and we learn from *Livy*, "that the *Romans* easily constructed the palisado with which they surrounded the *Neapolis*, the country being so completely covered with wood." Although this valley does not now possess so woody an appearance, it is, nevertheless, extremely luxuriant and beautiful, especially when contrasted with the wild and majestic alpine scenery with which it is entirely surrounded.

As this capital of *Sicily*, bordered by the *Tyrrhenian* sea, and enclosed on three sides by an amphitheatre of mountains, is, when viewed from without, of an appearance far from prepossessing, the traveller upon entering finds himself agreeably surprised at discovering he is within not only a beautiful, but likewise an extensive and well peopled metropolis, containing, within the circuit of eight miles, a population of nearly two hundred thousand persons.

Two large streets, the *Cassaro* and *Strada Nuova*, each upwards of a mile in length, and intersecting each other at right angles, divide the city, as it were, into four equal parts, cor-

responding with the four principal gates : these streets have the advantage of a wide footpath, and are, besides, extremely well paved ; they are also adorned through their whole length with the most splendid buildings. The centre where they meet is in the form of an octagon, and hence called *Piazza Ottangoloza* ; each side of this *Piazza*, or square, is decorated with a beautiful building three stories in height, composed of the three principal or original orders of architecture, the *Doric*, the *Ionic*, and the *Corinthian* ; and is besides enriched with statues and fountains. Standing in this *Piazza*, we enjoyed the most beautiful perspective views through the gates, terminated on three sides by majestic mountain scenery, and on the fourth by the “ dark blue ” sea : a similar *coup d’œil* is, perhaps, not to be met with in any other city in *Europe*.

As the climate of *Sicily* naturally tends to encourage indolence, and consequently devotion ; and as the *French* had been prevented by *British* valour from paying the *Sicilians* a fraternal visit, we were not surprised to find within *Palermo*, and its immediate vicinity, upwards of eighty monasteries and convents ; where, shame to the bigoted government, the

most beautiful females are every day immured. In fact, superstition appears to be carried to a greater extent in this country than it is at the present time either in *Portugal* or *Spain*.

Santa Rosalia, as before mentioned, is considered the protectress of *Palermo*, and to this holy saint the females, especially when afflicted with serious indisposition, or when suffering under any great temporal calamity, generally offer up their prayers, and vow, that if, by her kind intercession, they should recover, they will then ascend *Monte Pellegrino* barefooted, visit her shrine, and there return their praises and thanksgivings.

In corroboration of this assertion, we shall introduce the purport of a conversation with an elegant and accomplished female of *Palermo*, who had performed this pious journey : the young lady began in the most feeling and pathetic manner, by relating the circumstances under which she laboured at the period of making the vow, and then the adventures which befell her during the performance of her arduous undertaking. In the course of the narrative she stated that her feet were much cut and lacerated in ascending this steep

and rugged mountain ; and she concluded by confessing, that the pilgrimage to the grotto was not of so pleasant or agreeable a nature as to induce her ever to desire a repetition.

The natives of *Palermo* are, for the greater part, acute and penetrating ; they are also eloquent ; but their eloquence is of that sort, which manifests itself less by words than by actions ; they express much by different motions of the hands, head, shoulders, and eyes. The origin of this silent language has been generally attributed to despotism and tyranny, and it is even carried as far back as the days of *Gelon* : but as women seem to excel in this mute accomplishment, why not rather ascribe its invention to their able and indefatigable tutor, *Love*?

The women of *Palermo* are of a middling stature : black or chesnut-coloured hair, dark eyes, and regular features, are the predominant characteristics in their physiognomy. A slender shape, full bosom, and *Grecian* profile, may help to give some idea of that beauty which formerly served a *Phidias*, a *Praxiteles*, and an *Apelles*, as models, or which inspired *Acis* with a passion for his beloved *Galatea*.

Lais, the celebrated courtesan of antiquity, was a native of *Hycara*, a city situated to the westward of *Palermo*: this place being conquered by the *Athenians* under *Nicias*, she, with the rest of the inhabitants, were carried into *Greece*. *Lais* then established herself at *Corinth*, which became a new theatre of action for this celebrated beauty; here she attracted so much attention, that nearly all the great men of the time, including generals, orators, and philosophers, acknowledged the fascination of her charms.

History informs us, that even *Diogenes*, the *Cynic*, was among the number of her admirers; and, notwithstanding his squalid appearance and deformity, this famous courtesan was not insensible to his love: we also learn, that *Demosthenes* expressed himself anxious to obtain her favours; but the capricious beauty having demanded a sum nearly equal to two hundred pounds, this great orator quitted her, saying, that "he wished not to pay so dear for a single repentance." Thus *Sicily* appears to have been famous even in former days for the beauty of its women; and, generally speaking, this distinction still belongs to it.

The females of *Palermo* are educated mostly in convents, where, to guard against seduction, they generally remain until they are of a marriageable age. Even the lower classes are shocked at the idea of suffering their daughters to serve as chamber or waiting-maids, much less as common servants, these domestic offices being performed in this country, as well as in *Portugal*, *Spain*, and *Italy*, partly by men, and partly by elderly women. The females often remain in the convent till they enter the married state, which frequently takes place before they are fourteen ; and the consequence of these early unions is, that comparatively young grandmothers are not unfrequent. While at *Catania* we knew a lady under forty years of age, who had a grand-daughter upwards of ten.

Besides the piano-forte, the guitar is in great request among the natives : the *Sicilian* females play upon the latter divinely, accompanying themselves by melodious sonnets. Their dress is well adapted to the climate ; the head, as in a great part of *Spain*, is generally uncovered, and no *cappotta* or hood envelopes or disguises their well-formed figure ; a silken ribbon or a fresh rose is blended with their elegant tresses, and no high stays distort by unnatural

pressure their charming *contour*, a light corset only encompassing their prominent bosom: amber from *Catania*, or red coral from *Trapani*, adorn their necks, and a black veil, after the *Spanish* fashion, covers their head when they appear in the public streets.

The deportment of these lovely women, their dancing, and their attitudes, are attractively elegant; their conversation is spirited and lively; their countenances express sometimes a soft languor, at others a playful character: their tone of voice is literally enchanting.

Foreigners are received at *Palermo* with particular hospitality and attention, the *Sicilians* being always anxious to congratulate them on their arrival; every one is made welcome, but the *English* appear to be the favoured nation.

Political papers are here, as in the greater part of *Europe*, extremely scarce, and but of little importance, in consequence of the restriction upon the press being so rigid and severe. New books, such as voyages, travels, works of science, or even romances or novels, are also rare in *Palermo*; and their appearance

forms an era in the literary history of this city.

The very great restrictions under which literature in all its various branches is placed, was exemplified in the fullest manner during the time we were occupied at the custom-house. Three holy monks were there busily employed in examining a collection of foreign books: as they respectively looked through, we observed that they divided them into two separate parcels, one of which, as we understood, were considered by them as proper to be read; the other, by far the greater number, consisting of new works on the different sciences, which these most reverend and holy *inquisitors* had not sense enough to understand, were set aside to be eternally damned: in all probability these latter were eventually committed to the flames.

The climate of *Palermo* has always been considered very salubrious, the temperature of winter seldom falling lower than 50 degrees *Fahrenheit*: in summer the heat certainly is great, remaining for many months between 85 and 90. The inhabitants, during the continuance of this warm weather, regularly shut

up their houses and shops a little before noon, and keep them so till about three; this period of time they occupy in getting their repast, and then taking their *siesta*, or afternoon nap: in fact, *Palermo* is, as it were, dead during this part of the day.

Sicily is frequently visited with that wind, so extremely fatal to the inhabitants of the sultry clime of *Africa*, and which is called by the *Italians* the *Scirocco*: when it occurs, the temperature rises to about 110 degrees; its duration, however, seldom continues long, or otherwise it would infallibly be attended with the most dreadful consequences.

CHAPTER VI.

PALERMO.

Fête of Santa Rosalia.

WITH an account of the solemn *fête* of *Santa Rosalia*, translated from a *Sicilian* work, although the same did not take place during our continuance in the city, we shall bid adieu to the gay and fascinating *Palermo*.

“ The voluptuous and perhaps monotonous life of the inhabitants of *Palermo* is interrupted by the annual *fête* of *Santa Rosalia*, certainly the most brilliant and enthusiastic display of devotion which exists at the present day in *Europe*. But as we frequently find at the opera, that the splendour exhibited in the ballets and *fêtes* often obscures the general interest of the spectacle, so in these rejoicings, we equally lose sight of *Santa Rosalia*, if, at the end of the fifth day, after a most tumultuous

procession, we did not behold the shrine of this holy saint.

“ The car upon which this shrine is borne is decorated, or rather overloaded with ornaments of every species ; it is drawn by forty mules, and filled by a considerable number of musicians. This enormous machine, certainly the richest and most magnificent ever put in motion, commences its march on the first day, without the shrine, from the *Marina*, and tremblingly traverses the *Cassaro* from the *Porta felice* to the royal palace, situated at the other extremity of this street. A grand display of fire-works here takes place, and the amusements of the day terminate by the *Cassaro* being splendidly illuminated.

“ This street, decorated alternately with porticos and fountains along its whole length, which is upwards of a mile, upon a plan rather concave, presents, on this occasion, a *coup-d'œil* of the most pleasing nature.

“ The people quietly promenade the *Cassaro* until midnight, when they retire, and the coaches of the nobility arrive and take possession. The gravity of the *Sicilians* is con-

spicuous during the celebration of this festival: they partake of all its gaieties and pleasures without manifesting the slightest external symptoms of delight; and the various ceremonies pass off with a perfect regularity which never requires the interference of the police, although upwards of one hundred thousand persons are assembled together on the occasion.

“ The principal amusements of the second day consist in their races: youths about twelve years of age ride the horses without saddle or bridle, and it is astonishing to see with what address they keep their seats. The horses are assembled and arranged behind a cord, where there is considerable difficulty to retain them: the animals being full of ardour, and, as it were, conscious that they are going to contend the prize, seem to strive to prevent each other from getting the foremost.

“ Upon one of the senators, who is stationed in a species of booth, sounding a bell, the little jockeys instantly mount, and sit well advanced towards the shoulders, with their head almost reclining upon the neck of the horse. At the second sound the cord falls; the horses then

set off, and by the discharge of a cannon, the people are informed that they are on the way; the crowd immediately opens, and leaves a free passage for them to pass. Another senator, who is stationed at the extremity of the course, adjudges the prize, after which, the little jockey who has been successful is carried in triumph, decorated with a golden eagle suspended around his neck, amid the acclamations of the assembled people.

“ The horses are generally the property of rich individuals, and are trained and fed the whole year for this express purpose. The races occupy part of three days; the first is between country horses, the second between mares, and the third, which is by far the most rapid, between *Barbary* coursers.

“ The amusements of the second day are completed by the car returning from the royal palace to the *Marina*, stopping almost every ten paces in order that the numerous spectators may enjoy the music: the car, as well as the *Cassaro*, are again most splendidly illuminated.

“ The third day commences with another race, and the car also repeats its journey from

the *Marina* to the palace. In the evening there is a grand display of fire-works upon the *Marina*; and the buildings contiguous to the port, as well as the *Cassaro*, are again illuminated in such a superb manner, that viewed from the bay, it fills the imagination with the idea of an enchanted city*.

“ The diversion of the fourth day again commences with the course. Without comparing these races with those which take place in *England*, yet, from their rapidity, they are in no respect less interesting: the horses generally run the whole length of the *Cassaro*, which is upwards of a mile, in less than a minute and a half.

“ The evening of this day is particularly distinguished by a spectacle altogether new, and of which it is impossible to form an idea without having witnessed it. This superb spectacle is the illumination of the cathedral, which is executed in a manner truly enchanting. The interior of this vast edifice is so decorated, that the most pleasing effects are

* The author of this tour fully concurs in this sentiment, having, during the night that he lay in the bay of *Naples*, seen that beautiful city illuminated.

produced by merely introducing such trifles as fringes, garlands of various coloured papers, silver tissue, little pieces of glass, and many other articles of even less value: the whole is, however, so well arranged, and the church is lighted with so much taste, that, upon entering, it presents to the imagination the idea of being within the precincts of a fairy palace.

“ The fifth and last day is celebrated by a long and continued procession, which commences shortly after the setting of the sun, and continues till one hour after midnight. It is upon this occasion that all the taste of the inhabitants of *Palermo*, for religious spectacles, is fully developed. Every confraternity or religious order bears in this procession a portrait or image as large as life of its particular saint. The charge of arranging the different toilettes is wholly left to the nuns, who never fail in dressing and decorating either *Judith* or the *Holy Virgin*, to pay great attention *à la dernière mode*, or, in other words, to the last fashion imported from *Paris*.

“ These representations of the different saints, enlivened by artificial rays, and ornamented with all sorts of garlands, are carried on a

frame constructed of timber, which is borne on the shoulders of thirty or forty men, who consider they are achieving their own eternal salvation by carrying their particular saint faster than those behind, and thus gaining time to make counter-marches and evolutions: at last *Santa Rosalia*, in her triumphal car, solemnly traverses the *Cassaro*. The presence of their protectress considerably increases the universal joy of the people: as the holy saint approaches, every knee bends in pious adoration; and thus terminates this most splendid *fête* of *Santa Rosalia*."

CHAPTER VII.

Alcamo—The ancient Segeste—Salemi—Castro Vetrano.

WE finally bade adieu to the enchanting *Palermo* early on the morning of the 22d of *April*, and proceeded for four miles along a straight road, which, on looking back, presented a most delightful vista through the centre of the city. We arrived at the foot of the mountains which form an amphitheatre around the luxuriant plains which encircle this city: and while ascending them, we frequently cast a “longing lingering eye” towards that delightful abode, which we were leaving, probably never again to behold it. The distance traversed in passing these mountains exceeded fifteen miles, and when upon their summit, we were highly gratified in enjoying a most extensive and superb panoramic view, terminated by the re-

ceding alpine scenery of *Sicily*, and the majestic *Mediterranean* sea. After having crossed this tremendous chain, our way lay through a rural and romantic valley, which appeared in a state of high cultivation, and was occasionally interspersed with groves of oranges and lemons. We now began to ascend an eminence upon which stood *Alcamo*, a considerable inland town, containing about sixteen thousand inhabitants : here we remained to pass the night. The road lately made terminates at this town, beyond which it is impossible for carriages to travel.

We quitted *Alcamo* early in the morning, and proceeded on mules towards the ancient *Segeste* : the bridle-way, if we may so express ourselves, was very bad, and lay through an uncultivated and mountainous country. After travelling upwards of three hours, we arrived before a beautiful *Grecian* temple, majestically situated upon the summit of a barren mountain surrounded by other steril eminences of still greater elevation.

Segeste, *Ægeste*, or *Acesta*, was undoubtedly one of the most ancient cities in *Sicily*. We learn from many of the authors of antiquity,

and more especially from *Cicero*, that it was founded by *Eneas*, after he fled from the ruins of burning *Troy*. “*Oppidum pervetus in Sicilia est, quod ab Enea fugiente a Troja, atque in hoc loco veniente conditum demonstrat.*” Agreeably to this tradition, the inhabitants of *Segeste* erected a temple to *Eneas*, where they offered up divine honours.

In the course of time, this city becoming one of the richest and most flourishing in the island, changed its politics, and seceded from the alliance which it had previously maintained with *Agathocles*, tyrant of *Syracusa*, who, in consequence, made war upon and conquered it. *Agathocles* then changed its name to *Diccapolis*.

These events, although supported by the concurring testimony of ancient historians, are yet so remote, that they almost cease to produce any degree of interest. We cannot, however, for a moment hesitate in believing that *Segeste* enjoyed at one time a great celebrity in the political transactions of *Sicily*. This city and *Selinus* were rivals for a considerable period, and she then enjoyed so much consequence, that the *Athenians* did not hesi-

tate to seek her alliance. It afterwards passed into the hands of the *Carthaginians*, who retained possession of this part of *Sicily* for a considerable number of years.

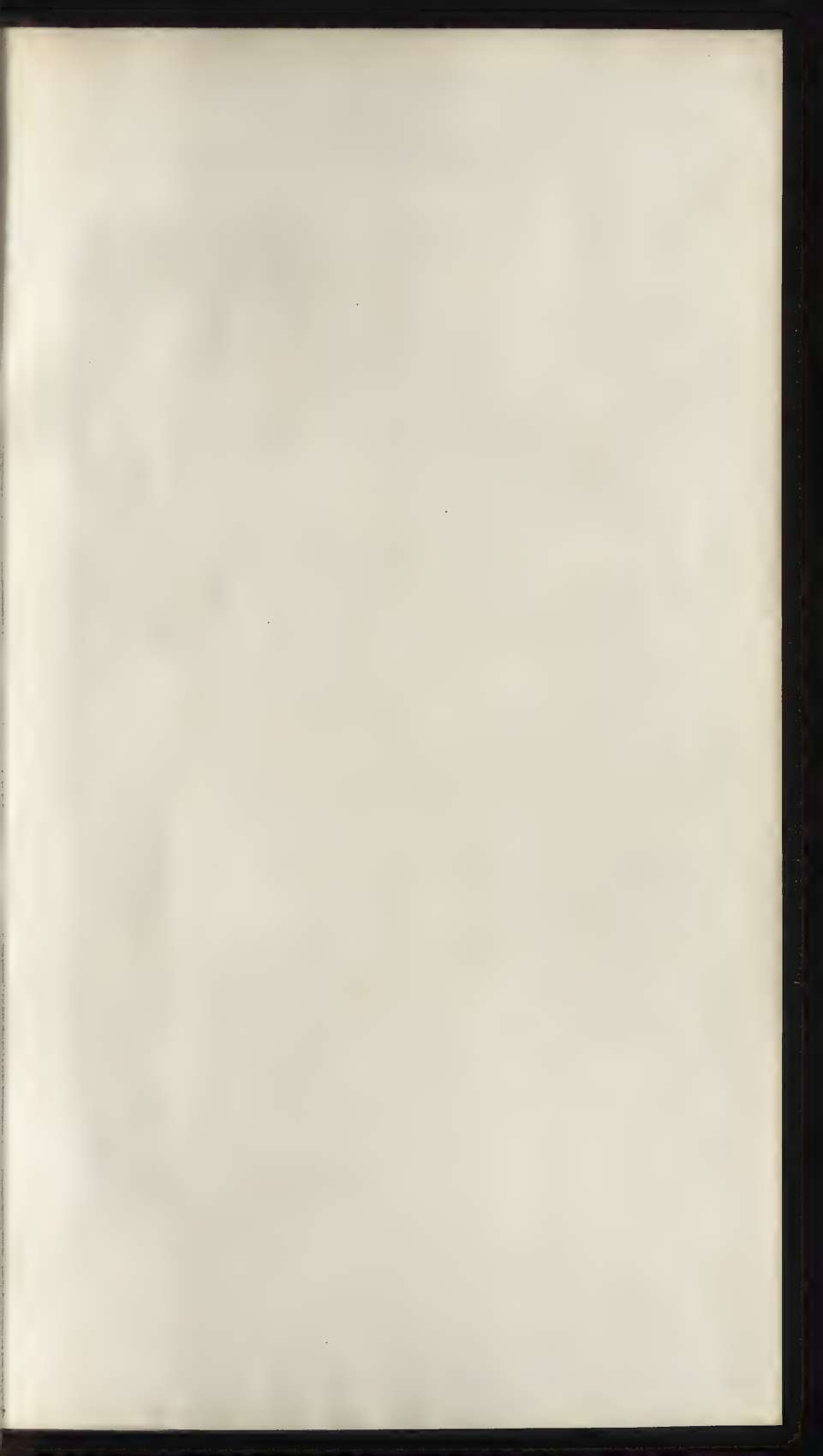
We have no doubt that the magnificence of *Segeste*, even after *Sicily* had become a province of the *Roman* empire, was very great, as we learn from *Cicero* that *Verres*, the avaricious *Roman* prætor, succeeded in carrying away from it a celebrated bronze statue of *Diana*. The inhabitants felt so much regret and sorrow at this impious sacrilege, that, upon its removal, they followed it some distance out of the city, having previously anointed it with odoriferous oils, and crowned it with flowers.

We find also in the same oration, that the *Carthaginians*, who some time previously had been at war and conquered *Segeste*, carried away every thing valuable, including this precious statue: but it happened that during the third *Punic* war, *Scipio Africanus* having invaded *Mauritania*, and finally subdued *Carthage*, took possession of all the treasures which the *Carthaginians* had for many years been accumulating. This celebrated statue of

Diana being then recovered, and the *Roman* general well knowing the circumstances under which they had become possessed of it, conceived himself bound in honour to restore it to its original possessors.

The site of the ancient city lies some distance from the temple, and upon an eminence still more elevated. We minutely examined it, and discovered various fragments of buildings, as well as the ruins of a theatre, which had been originally constructed of stones of an immense size, set, agreeably to the accustomed manner of the *Greeks*, without lead, cement, or mortar. Its situation could have possessed but few advantages, being erected upon a very irregular surface, and in a wild uncultivated country, exposed to all winds, and without the conveniences either of a river or port.

Although we may consider the city as completely gone, yet, by some fortunate circumstance or other, the temple has been providentially preserved, and remains at the present time in almost as perfect a state as when it was originally constructed. This sacred building was consecrated to *Ceres*, and is placed





1. Bridge, Rome

upon an elevation, which is bordered on three sides by a deep ravine.

The *coup d'œil* of this temple, when first seen, and of the surrounding mountainous scenery, is grand and sublime in the highest degree: the accompanying view affording but a very faint idea of its actual beauty.

The celebrated amphitheatre of *Rome*, erected by the Emperors *Vespasian* and *Titus*, sufficiently capacious to accommodate upwards of seventy thousand persons, and even that most stupendous of all modern buildings, the *Basilica* of *Saint Peter*, in the same city, create sentiments of awe and admiration only by their colossal magnificence: but in approaching this once sacred temple, so perfectly chaste and simple, and at the same time so truly elegant and beautiful, the mind becomes impressed with feelings of a different nature, and seems imperceptibly carried into the regions above, leaving all sublunary objects far behind.

The temple is of the *Doric* order, and about one hundred and eighty-nine feet two inches in length, and seventy-nine feet four inches in breadth. It presents a portico of six columns

in front, and has fourteen on the sides; their diameter is six feet eleven inches and a half, and their height, including the capital, thirty feet four inches; the height of the entablature, which is extremely massive and heavy, is eleven feet seven inches: thus making the whole height from the *stylobates*, or plinth, to the uppermost member of the cornice, forty-one feet eleven inches.

After having devoted the greater part of the day in viewing the ruins of the ancient *Segeste*, we proceeded towards *Salemi*. In traversing this part of the country, we crossed a small river, the *San Bartolomeo*, anciently called the *Crimisius*; we likewise passed through the towns of *Calatifimi* and *San Vito*, and arrived in the evening at *Salemi*. Here we remained during the night at a most miserable *osteria*; the chamber which we occupied was extremely dirty, and, literally speaking, swarmed with domestic vermin of almost every species.

In this town, which presented a most abject appearance, we witnessed a scene which effectually demonstrated the state of credulity and superstition by which the greater part of the *Sicilians* are even at the present day de-

graded. An assembly of peasants, to the number of about five hundred, under the direction of the priests, were parading in procession about the town, visiting the different churches, and offering up their praises for the late rains which Providence, agreeably to her beneficent will, had kindly shed upon their country. The peasants forming this procession were uncovered, and wore a crown of thorns on their heads.

Sicily, when carefully examined with respect to the state of the public roads, the excessively bad accommodation, and the great inconveniences to which persons travelling are liable, the apparent want of that manufacturing and mechanical genius which is in other countries making such rapid progress, and the superstition and bigotry which still continue to blind the inhabitants, impress the irresistible conviction, that it is at least a century behind the other kingdoms of *Europe*.

From *Salemi* we proceeded on our way to *Castro Vetrano*, through a country formed alternately of sterile mountains and fruitful valleys, which presented a diversified and interesting appearance; and as our day's journey

did not exceed fifteen miles, we arrived at *Castro Vetrano* early in the morning. There being no *locanda*, or inn in this place, we were under the necessity of applying to the *padre rettore*, or prior of the convent of *Dominicans*, who received us in a very courteous manner, and immediately gave directions for our accommodation within the convent.

Castro Vetrano is rather a large *paese*, or town, and contains nearly twenty thousand inhabitants; it is well built, principally with stone, and the streets are laid out with considerable attention to regularity.

CHAPTER VIII.

The ancient Selinus.

DURING the period of our stay at *Castro Vetrano*, we made an excursion to the ancient *Selinus*, or *Selinunte*, situated about seven miles to the southward of this town, and contiguous to the sea. The road to these celebrated ruins lies through a country clothed with the greatest luxuriance, the various eminences being enriched with the vine and olive, and the different valleys profusely cultivated with corn, and occasionally spangled with orange groves. During this little trip, we crossed an inconsiderable rivulet, the *Maduini*, anciently called the *Selinus*.

The plains in the vicinity of *Selinus* were formerly much celebrated; even *Virgil* bestowed upon them the name of *palmosa*, which

they doubtless merited, for even at the present day, they are completely covered with a species of dwarf *palm*, or *palmetto*, the leaves of which are rendered serviceable by being converted into brooms and various other articles of domestic use.

When at some distance the immense ruins of the ancient *Selinus* presented themselves, our fancy led us to suppose we were approaching the works of giants; for, from their enormous bulk, we could with difficulty conceive that we were beholding the labours of men: every column resembling a tower, and every fragment of a fallen capital, a rock. The ancients, in rearing such colossal and magnificent structures, must certainly have had the real worship of their gods much less in view, than the desire of astonishing mankind.

The plan of *Selinus*, which is easily traced from the existence of the walls, is a vast semicircle or horseshoe, whose two extremities abut next the sea, and are there terminated by bastions or towers; the port, consequently, lay between these towers, but no remains of it are now visible.

It is immediately obvious, from the order which reigns among these ruins, that their dilapidation must have been the effect of an earthquake or some other violent convulsion of nature, rather than, according to commonly received opinion, that they were destroyed by *Annibal* as a punishment to the inhabitants for having so long and so obstinately defended their city against the *Carthaginian* army. *Diodorus*, whose statement tends to confirm this opinion, says, "that the city was pillaged and the private dwellings destroyed," but not a word relative to the temples. We likewise learn from the same authority, that after the city was taken, the *Syracusans* sent ambassadors to *Annibal*, requesting that the prisoners might be released, and that he would not suffer the sacred temples of the gods to be profaned. To these deputies *Annibal* replied, that the *Selinuntians* not having known how to defend their liberty, deserved to lose it, and that the gods were so much displeased with their conduct, that they wished not to remain in their city.

However, to the prayer of *Empedion*, a citizen of *Selinus*, who had always favoured the interest of the *Carthaginians*, *Annibal* at length

yielded ; and he returned to the inhabitants all their riches, permitting those who had withdrawn from the city to return, upon condition of paying from that period an annual tribute to *Carthage*.

The smallest of the temples, still existing in this city, has the first stones of all the columns preserved in their original situation. This edifice is of the *Doric* order, and consists of a portico of six columns in front and thirteen on the sides : the columns are fluted, and about five feet nine inches in diameter.

Near this temple is another of much larger dimensions, elevated upon the same general principles as to plan, and having likewise thirteen columns on the sides, and a portico of six in front.

We next proceeded to view the ruins of the remaining temple, which was of much greater extent, and had originally been consecrated to the *Olympic Jove*. Judging from the ruins of this sacred edifice, it must have been about three hundred and thirty-two feet two inches in length, and one hundred and forty-seven feet four inches in breadth, and have had a portico of eight co-

lums in front, and sixteen on the sides : the whole of the plot of ground, formerly occupied by it, is now covered with immense fragments of large dimensions. We measured one of the stones which had originally formed part of the architrave ; it was twenty-one feet in length, five feet eight inches in depth, and six feet nine inches in breadth, containing, consequently, eight hundred and three cubic feet, which, according to the specific gravity of stone, must have weighed upwards of fifty tons. We observed that many of the columns of this temple were fluted in part only, which circumstance naturally led us to believe that the edifice had never been completely finished.

The more we occupied ourselves in viewing these colossal masses of stone, the more anxious we were to ascertain what means the ancients had employed to move them ; we were also greatly desirous of knowing in what manner they had raised such gigantic columns, and afterwards placed upon them the entablature, many portions of which were so enormously heavy : and we were lost in amazement when we reflected upon the machinery that must have been employed to have transported these ponderous stones from the quarries, which

were situated about six miles to the westward of the city.

After musing a considerable time on this interesting subject, we minutely examined many of the fragments, and observed that several of them were pierced through their whole thickness, while others had holes in their upper surface only, evidently for the insertion of a dovetail of iron, consisting of three pieces, the two external ones of which bevelled outwards; the greater number, however, had apparently been raised by means of a chain or rope being inserted in a groove of a cylindrical form, made at both ends of the stone: by these means they were raised as if by two handles.

After finishing our examination of the temples, we proceeded to view the ruins generally of this celebrated city; we could not, however, discover a single vestige of the part originally fortified towards the sea; and, according to all accounts, it has remained in this state ever since the period of its destruction by *Annibal*. On the western side the walls exist in almost as perfect a state as when originally built, and their construction perfectly

agrees with the description given by *Vitruvius* of the ancient masonry of the *Greeks*.

The two vast flights of steps also remain by which the inhabitants ascended from the port to the level of the principal part of the city, which, with their accustomed good taste, was situated upon a commanding eminence. The ancients appear to have far excelled the moderns in producing grand effects in architecture, generally placing their temples and other public edifices in such situations, that they were always seen to the greatest advantage, and under the most favourable points of view.

The examination of this city, certainly one of the most splendid and magnificent the *Greeks* ever founded, and where the arts had been carried to the highest degree of perfection, afforded us the greatest pleasure. It was founded by the inhabitants of *Megare* about 725 years B. C.

CHAPTER IX.

*Sciacca, the ancient Thermæ Selinuntinæ—Porto
Nuovo of Girgenti.*

FROM *Castro Vetrano* we continued our journey towards the east, and met with a small rivulet called the *Belici*, the ancient *Hypsa*, which flows in a serpentine course between high banks luxuriantly overgrown with the ivy, rose, jessamine, and vine, naturally and elegantly intermingled under the protecting foliage of the weeping willow and wide spreading elm. We also passed another river, the *Carbo*, the *Acithius* of antiquity, and then approached the sea : and after proceeding for several miles along the sands, we arrived at *Sciacca*, the ancient *Thermæ Selinuntinæ*.

This town is situated upon an eminence, and presents, in its approach, a very agreeable prospect ; but, alas ! upon entering, those fa-

vourable impressions immediately vanish, and the traveller finds himself in a *paese* of considerable extent, where he is unable to procure even suitable accommodation for his mule.

The *Thermæ Selinuntinæ* is one of the most ancient towns in *Sicily*; *Fazzelli*, a *Sicilian* historian, who wrote about the commencement of the sixteenth century, and who was a native of this place, considers it as having been founded at a period anterior to all the establishments made in the island, whether by the *Greeks* or the *Carthaginians*: in fact, not one of the authors of antiquity afford any information as to the time when it was founded; or who were the first people that established themselves upon this fertile and agreeable spot.

The town is celebrated as being the native place of *Agathocles*, one of the greatest men this country ever produced: he was the son of a simple potter, and by the strength of his genius and the superiority of his talents, he eventually subjected and governed his country.

Among the different manufactories of *terracotta* vases, so much in use among the an-

cients, those which were established in this immediate neighbourhood, were considered by far the most celebrated ; and there appears no doubt, but most of the vases, which are preserved in the different museums of *Sicily*, were originally manufactured in these potteries.

This neighbourhood is famous for the hot baths, as the appellation *Thermæ Selinuntinæ* implies. These baths, it is said, were constructed by *Dedalus*, that universal genius, the inventor of all arts, every where desired, and from every place expelled ; who formed the celebrated *Cretan* labyrinth, and after covering himself equally with crimes and with glory, came to seek an asylum of *Cocalus*, King of the *Sicanians* (a race of people who inhabited this part of *Sicily* at a very early period), in order to shelter himself from the vengeance of *Minos*, King of *Crete*. Fabulous history relates that this king pursued *Dedalus* for having favoured the amour between his wife, *Pasiphae*, and *Taurus*, without success ; he remaining concealed within these baths.

This place has been, from time immemorial, highly celebrated for the hot mineral springs

which rise in the valley on the eastern side of the town. These springs are strongly impregnated with sulphur, and the water, wherever it runs, produces the same natural effects as the *Solfatara*, or lake of *Zenobia*, near *Tivoli* in *Italy*, namely, that of leaving a thick and lapideous sediment, which hardens itself in a short space of time, and ultimately becomes converted into a species of stone. They are considered very efficacious in cutaneous and scorbutic disorders, and also in paralytic affections: upon immersing our thermometer in one of them, it immediately rose to 120, and in another to 126 degrees of *Fahrenheit*.

Sciacca is still protected by the ancient walls, and contains about twelve thousand inhabitants: it is one of the appointed stations where there is a *caricatore* or magazine for corn intended to be exported. The rock upon which the town stands is excavated in various directions, and these subterraneous chambers serve as granaries, in which the corn so deposited is preserved. After a certain quantity has been delivered, the proprietor receives an acknowledgment from the officer superintending the establishment, specifying its amount, which

acknowledgment becomes negotiable in the mercantile world for the space of one year.

With the assistance of the *Sicilian* gentleman who acted as the *English* vice-consul, we succeeded in hiring a *speronara*, or species of long boat, *latine* or square rigged, with a crew of eight men, for the purpose of conveying us to the port of *Girgenti*, a distance of about forty miles. We embarked a little before eight o'clock in the morning, and commenced our excursion under the most flattering prospects, the day being extremely fine, and the weather very favourable.

We had scarcely hoisted the sails, and stood out to sea, when a strong breeze sprung up, which carried our *speronara* at the rate of eight knots or miles per hour; so strong was this breeze, that the *capitano* or master thought it prudent to order the crew to lie in the bottom of the boat in order to serve more effectually as ballast.

We enjoyed, during this pleasant sail, a succession of the most romantic views of the neighbouring coast of *Sicily*, and at the same time a

superb prospect of the *Mediterranean* sea, whose "dark blue" has been so much and so often eulogized, especially by that bright star of poetic genius, who now shines with such resplendency over our northern hemisphere.

There is nothing in the universe calculated to inspire such sublime conceptions of omnipotent power, as the view of the boundless sea, whether we are sailing during a calm upon its unruffled surface, or whether encountering the violent and pitiless storm, tossed to and fro, and riding as it were, upon the summit of its terrific waves : in either, and in both cases, an atheist cannot but confess that he perceives indubitable marks of that Providence under whom "we all live and move, and have our being."

Assisted with so favourable a breeze, we succeeded in making the port of *Girgenti* a few minutes before one o'clock, our *speronara* having run the forty miles within the space of five hours. This harbour is formed by means of a pier or mole, built about a century since, and also possesses the advantage of a lighthouse erected on the adjoining cliff, the mole not being sufficiently elevated : nature has,

indeed, contributed little towards its formation; it has therefore been to the assistance rendered by art, that *Girgenti* is indebted for this essential convenience. This place, like *Sciacca*, is one of the stations appointed for a *caricatore*, and the granaries are in like manner formed of spacious excavations in the neighbouring rocks.

CHAPTER X.

GIRGENTI, THE ANCIENT AGRIGENTUM.

Description of the ancient and modern City—The Cathedral—Temple of Juno—Temple of Concord—Sepulchral Niches—Temple of Esculapius—Tomb of Theron—Temple of Hercules.

AFTER taking some refreshment at the port of *Girgenti*, we hired mules and proceeded towards the city, which is situated upon an eminence about four miles distant; the road is rural and romantic, and lies between *Monte Toro*, the site where the *Carthaginian* army encamped, on the left, and the spot where the *Romans* fixed their station, which still retains its original appellation, *Campo Romano*, on the right. In traversing this small tract of country, we passed the river *Drago*, anciently the *Agragas*, and afterwards approached and entered the city by the same steep and winding pathway that *Dædalus* constructed when he was employed by *Cocalus* to render it impregnable. This approach is formed with so

much skill and ingenuity, that *Diodorus* remarked, that three or four soldiers were deemed sufficient to guard it. “ Tam arctum et flexuosum ejus fecit aditum, ut a trium aut quatuor hominum præsidio defendi posset.”

After wandering about this once celebrated and hospitable city, seeking an *albergo*, or inn, but without success, we applied to the *Padre rettore*, or prior of the convent of *Dominicans*, who received us with the greatest civility, and gave orders for our immediate reception within the sacred building: here, thanks to Providence, we found ourselves more comfortable than we had been since we quitted *Palermo*. It has already been observed that the *English* are received with greater attention by the *Sicilians* than other foreigners; and this fact was fully confirmed by the conduct of the *Padre*, who, although upwards of seventy years of age, insisted upon the author occupying his bed, while his *German* companions were consigned to other cells, which were almost in an unfurnished state.

The ancient city of *Agrigente*, or *Agrigentum*, as may be seen by referring to the accompanying topographical plan, was situated about





eighteen *stadia*, or two miles and a quarter, from the sea, and between two rivers, the *Drago* and the *San Blazio*, anciently the *Agragas* and the *Hypsa*. This extensive and populous city was erected upon several heights, and the most elevated of them (*Monte Camico*) was occupied by their fortress or castle, to which *Polybius* thus alludes, speaking of the almost inaccessible nature of this rock: "Quæ ab exterioriore parte, voragine altâ atque inaccessa circumdatur." Modern *Girgenti* occupies this particular height.

The following description of this celebrated city is derived from *Polybius*, who flourished about a century before the Christian era.

"The city of *Agrigentum* surpasses most other cities, not only by its fortifications, but also by the beauty and magnificence of its edifices, and being only eighteen *stadia* from the sea, it is therefore abundantly supplied with all the natural productions of the marine kingdom. Further, the city is most completely fortified both by nature and art, and its walls are built upon a rock, which forms an excellent foundation; above all, it has been rendered inaccessible by the labours of men,

where it was not so of itself. Besides, this city is partly surrounded by rivers; on the south by the *Agragas*, and on the west by the *Hypsa*: and on that side regarding the east is the fortress, which is environed by a very deep ravine. There are erected on the heights of this citadel a temple of *Minerva*, and another of *Jupiter Atabyricus*; and as *Agrigentum* was originally colonized from *Rhodes*, it is therefore with reason that they worship this god in the same manner as the *Rhodians*. Among many other things with which this city is enriched, are several beautiful temples and magnificent galleries; and as to the temple of the *Olympic Jupiter*, although it is not more sumptuous, nevertheless it yields not to those of *Greece*, either as to beauty or grandeur."

Nothing can be more exact than this description, although written nearly two thousand years ago. With this account in our hand, we found it easy to trace the circuit of *Agrigentum*, the extent of its walls, and the exact position of the different heights upon which the city was erected: the distance from the sea is likewise correct.

One of the first objects which attracted our

attention in *Girgenti* was an antique tomb enriched with *basso relievo*, preserved in the cathedral, and now used as the baptismal font. We spent some time over this *sarcophagus*, whose sculpture represents the story of *Phædra* and *Hippolytus*: and although nothing is decisively known relating to this specimen of ancient art, yet much discussion has taken place upon the subject. The general opinion, however, appears to be, that it was commenced by some able statuary who executed a certain portion, but that it was not completed until some centuries afterwards, and at a period when the different arts had fallen considerably into decay.

The cathedral is composed of the *Norman* style of architecture, very injudiciously intermixed with the *Grecian*, and presents rather a gloomy appearance. It possesses a similar quality to the whispering gallery at *St. Paul's*, and our *cicerone* thought to have greatly surprised us by requesting one to ascend upon the upper face of the entablature, which runs round the interior of the building, and proceed to the eastern end, and placing another on the pavement at the western extremity. Thus situated, we carried on a conversation in an

under voice, which was perfectly audible, although upwards of three hundred feet apart.

We next traversed the other portions of the modern city without finding any thing worthy of observation, except a church, *Santa Maria dei Greci*, erected on the site formerly occupied by the temple of *Jupiter*. This temple was originally built by *Phalaris*, a tyrant of *Agrigentum*, who rendered himself conspicuous by his cruelties, and ultimately became so much abhorred, that the *Agrigentines* stoned him to death. Its remains are, however, completely concealed by the modern structures with which it is surrounded.

The modern city, as we have before mentioned, now occupies the site of the original fortress of the ancient *Agrigentum*, and overlooks a vast extent of country. It was from this eminence that we first beheld the burning *Etna*, although upwards of ninety miles distant, whose alpine summit, white with eternal snow, distinctly appeared, not only above all the intermediate mountains, but also above the very clouds.

A very adequate notion may be formed of

the splendour of the ancient *Agrigentum* by viewing from the immediate vicinity of the modern city the surrounding ruins, composed as they are of the broken magnificence of temples and other monuments. It was most deservedly held, after *Syracusa*, the next in the rank of *Sicilian* cities.

The ruins of one of the principal buildings, the temple of *Juno Lacinia*, are situated at the south-eastern extremity of the city; it was elevated upon a *stylobates*, or plinth, ten feet in height, which served as a base, and was of the *Doric* order and fluted, having a portico of six columns in front, and thirteen on the sides. Although this superb monument is in a state of great decay, it yet presents the most imposing and the most picturesque appearance.

We read in *Pliny*, that the *Agrigentines* preserved within this temple of *Juno* one of the most precious paintings of antiquity, representing the goddess herself, which was executed by *Zeuxis*, who flourished about 470 years B. C. This incomparable artist succeeded in enduing this deity with a character and grace almost divine; and the means he employed to attain this

perfection, which nature very rarely bestows, even in the form of the most perfect and lovely of women, were to require that the *Agrigentines* should produce before him the most beautiful females of the city, in order that he might choose one to serve him as a model for his proposed *Juno*. *Zeuxis*, however, not finding in any one that union of charms and proportions which he desired, retained five of the most elegant, in order to select from each that particular description of beauty in which they separately excelled. “Deprehenditur tamen *Zeuxis* in capitibus articulisque, alioquin tantus diligentia, ut *Agrigentinis* facturum tabulam, quam in templo *Junonis Laciniæ* dicarent, inspexerit virgines eorum nudas et quinque elegerit, ut quod in quaque laudatissimum esset, pictura redderit.”

After quitting the temple of *Juno*, we followed the direction of the ancient wall, till we arrived before the splendid temple of *Concord*, undoubtedly the most perfect *Grecian* monument existing in *Sicily*. This temple is erected nearly in a line with that of *Juno*, and upon the same plan, with the exception of the plinth, which is not so much elevated.

When we reflect upon the imperceptible but incessant devastations committed by time upon all sublunary things, and more especially upon buildings, we cannot but confess that we were greatly surprised in beholding this sacred edifice, although erected upwards of two thousand years since, in so fine a state of preservation.

In various parts of the interior face of the ancient walls are numerous sepulchral niches, which appear to have been formed without any settled order, and in many places they are within a few inches of each other. We particularly examined these niches, in order to discover whether any paintings or other characteristic marks remained, by which the period of their formation could be ascertained. Failing, however, in this attempt, we next directed our inquiry among the antiquarians, but without success; neither could we learn that any vase or medal had ever been found within them. The only information which throws light upon the subject of their antiquity, is that of similar excavations having been generally discovered in such cities as were formerly inhabited by the *Phœnicians* or *Carthaginians*; it is therefore very probable

that these sepulchral niches owe their origin to one of those nations.

We still continued in the direction of the ancient walls, occupying ourselves in examining these niches, till we arrived before a breach which time had produced ; we passed through this, and then traversed the neighbouring plain, situated between the walls and the sea.

While upon this spot we amused ourselves with viewing the various tombs which lay scattered about in different directions ; they were similar to those within the walls, and possessed no features particularly interesting. We soon found ourselves, however, before the ruins of the temple of *Esculapius*, of which there is little now remaining, save the foundation, the plinth, and three columns. In the interior of the modern building, which almost envelops these ruins, an antique staircase still exists, which, in all probability, formed a part of the original temple.

Among other acts of rapacity related by *Cicero* in his charges against *Verres*, was that

of plundering this sacred edifice of a celebrated statue of *Apollo*. The orator makes a remark upon this statue worthy of observation; he states that it was the work of *Myron*, a famous *Greek* artist, who flourished about 440 years B. C., and that his name was inlaid upon the plinth in small letters of silver.

In an agreeable situation, a short distance from the temple of *Esculapius*, we met with an antique monument, generally known by the appellation of the tomb of *Theron*. It is of a square form, about fifteen feet on the plan, and its height about thirty; the basement is of plain masonry, surmounted by a cornice, and upon each angle is raised a column of the *Ionic* order: the whole is then finished by an entablature, in which *triglyphs*, the characteristic symbol of the *Doric*, are introduced. The design of this monument is certainly very indifferent, and corresponds in no respect with the other superb and classic buildings which formerly adorned this splendid and magnificent city.

History informs us that *Annibal*, after having almost wholly destroyed *Selinus* and plundered *Hymere*, whose inhabitants he immolated to the manes of *Amilcar*, undertook the siege of this

city ; and perceiving that the tombs situated without the walls served the besieged as secure places of retreat whenever they made a sortie, he gave orders that they should all be destroyed. It so happened, however, that the moment the soldiers were commencing their destructive operations upon this particular tomb, a violent storm arose, in which a thunderbolt fell ; this circumstance caused great consternation among them, and imagining they had incurred the displeasure of the gods, they immediately ceased from their intended work of destruction. Thus the tomb of *Theron* was eventually preserved.

After quitting this monumental structure, we re-entered the city by the ancient gate which formerly conducted to the sea, and immediately perceived the majestic remains of the temple of *Hercules*, which is wholly in ruins, there being scarcely two stones standing together in their original situation. Independently of the splendid magnificence with which this temple was originally constructed, we learn, especially from *Cicero*, that some of the finest statues and paintings of antiquity were preserved within the walls of this sacred temple. It possessed at one period an ex-

tremely fine bronze statue of *Hercules*, which the avaricious *Verres* felt so great a desire to transfer to the gallery he was then forming in *Rome*, that he gave orders for its clandestine removal; but while his soldiers were in the act of executing these commands, some *Agrigentines* who happened to be near immediately took the alarm, flew to arms, and in the end put the soldiers to flight; thereby preserving the statue of their god.

We learn from *Pliny*, that it was in this temple that the *Agrigentines* likewise preserved an extremely fine painting of *Zeuxis*, representing the infant *Hercules* strangling two serpents in the presence of *Alcmena* and *Amphytrion*. "*Zeuxis*," says this great writer, "so highly esteemed this painting, as to consider its value above any price; he therefore presented it to this sacred edifice."

CHAPTER XI.

GIRGENTI, THE ANCIENT AGRIGENTUM.

Temple of Jupiter Olympus—Temple of Castor and Pollux—The Piscina—General Observations respecting the Population, Situation, and Manners.

ON the other side of the street leading to the water-gate of the city, and almost opposite to the temple of *Hercules*, are the splendid and magnificent ruins of that of *Jupiter Olympus*, the largest edifice of the kind ever erected in *Sicily*. *Diodorus* states that it was three hundred and forty feet in length, sixty feet in breadth, and one hundred and twenty feet in height. It is impossible for a moment to doubt, and especially when the almost invariable proportions of the *Grecian* temples are considered, that the breadth of sixty feet must be an error, and that it should have been rather one hundred and sixty. An accurate examination of the ruins justifies this opinion.

The following is the description of this superb edifice from the pages of *Diodorus*.

“ The continual wars which occurred at *Agrigentum* hindered the inhabitants from terminating many edifices in their city, and more especially from placing a roof on the temple of *Jupiter*. This building is three hundred and sixty feet in length, sixty feet in breadth, and one hundred and twenty feet in height, to the point where the roof commences: it is the largest temple in *Sicily*, and may be compared with the grandest and most magnificent monument that ever existed in any other place; for although it has never been completed, it is possible to judge from what exists, and from the grandeur of its proportions, of what it would have been if finished. In the place that other temples are sustained solely by columns or by walls, they have employed in this temple both kinds of construction united, that is to say, they have formed the walls, pilasters, and columns together: by this mode the masses of stone forming the columns have been inserted square in the thickness of the wall. These inserted columns are twenty feet in circumference in the part detached from the wall, and their flutes are so large, that a man may easily

place himself in one of them: the doors are also of a proportionate size and grandeur. Upon that face of the temple which looks towards the east, they have represented a combat of giants, a work admirable, from the force and expression of the figures; and on the other face, looking towards the west, is represented the taking of *Troy*, executed with so much art, that it is even easy to distinguish the different heroes by the difference of their habiliments and arms."

We measured a flute of one of the columns in that part immediately under the capital, the girth of which was twenty-three inches; this circumstance confirms the statement made by *Diodorus*, of their being sufficiently capacious to conceal a man, or in the words of the historian, "inserere se apte queat."

There being so small a proportion of these gigantic ruins on the spot, we were induced to make some inquiry as to their disposal, and were informed, that the engineer to whose charge the building of the new mole at the port of *Girgenti* was committed, about the commencement of the last century, received directions from the *Sicilian* government to use

such of the materials of this temple as would facilitate the execution of this stupendous work. This immense edifice, like other ancient monuments, has certainly suffered much, not only from the lapse of time and the different revolutions of nature, which have so frequently occurred in this country, but considerably more from the hands of man. With respect to the *basso relievo* which *Diodorus* mentions as having been executed on two of the faces of this sacred temple, we could not discover the least vestige of them during our reiterated researches.

Leaving these grand and majestic ruins, we ceased to follow the walls, and took a direction towards the interior of the ancient *Agriгентum*, where the first objects that attracted our notice were some fragments of a circular marble entablature, lying in a garden of a small villa, and which, from the redundancy and richness of their sculptured ornaments, we were inclined to consider rather of *Roman* than of *Grecian* workmanship: this entablature probably belonged to a bath, as we observed the ruins of a circular foundation near them, together with a spring of pure water.

We then proceeded in the same direction,

and arrived before the ruins of the temple of *Castor* and *Pollux*, which is in such a state of decay, as to render it impossible to form any idea as to its plan; the shafts of two of the columns are the only parts now standing, all the rest lie upon the ground, and are mouldering imperceptibly into dust.

Not far distant from the ruins of this temple are the remains of the famous *Piscina*, excavated by the *Carthaginians*, who were made prisoners at the battle of *Hymere*. This celebrated battle, in which the *Carthaginians* were defeated with the loss of their whole army, was fought 480 years B. C., and took place on the same day that the three hundred *Spartans* successfully defended the pass of *Thermopylæ* against the immense army under the command of *Xerxes*. This *Piscina*, according to *Diodorus*, was near a mile in circumference, and excavated to the depth of one hundred and twenty feet.

It appears also from the works of the same historian, that the luxury of the inhabitants of *Agrigentum* had increased, at this period of time, to such an extent, that the *Piscina* was formed more for the purpose of keeping up

their voluptuous and extravagant mode of living, than as a means of provisioning the city, which was the alleged cause of its establishment. Independently of the immense number of fish of every kind that was bred in this lake for the tables of the rich, they also preserved every species of water-fowl, whose beautiful colours attracted so much attention, that the *Piscina* at last became the fashionable place of resort for all the idle loungers of the city. Although time has effaced much of its interior, yet it is extremely easy, even at the present day, to trace its form and extent. The canal, which formerly supplied this artificial lake with water from a neighbouring spring, still exists, and the water, which yet runs in its original channel, is extremely serviceable in supplying the rich and luxuriant gardens which now occupy the site of this ancient *Piscina*.

In a truly delightful situation, not far from the *Piscina*, is a small lake, whose water is said to be impregnated with oil; of course, we did not fail to visit this phenomenon, and although the surface was certainly covered with a whitish greasy slime, yet we could discover none of those little globules which are ge-

nerally formed by the mixing of oil and water together. We dipped our hands in the lake, and also tasted some of the water, which neither possessed any disagreeable odour, nor was it in the least unpleasant to the taste; it left, however, a kind of unctuousness about the hands not unlike that caused by using soap.

Having terminated our survey of the ancient *Agrigentum*, we feel justified in asserting, that it is surpassed by few cities either in respect to the beautiful and magnificent *Grecian* temples, and other antique monuments still existing, or the wild and romantic scenery with which it is surrounded: the circumjacent country is rural and luxuriant in the extreme, and is in so high a state of cultivation, that the soil is said to produce hundred-fold.

When we reflect upon the reputed population of the ancient *Agrigentum*, and take into consideration the extent of the city and suburbs, as well as the innumerable tombs with which it is on all sides encompassed, we cannot for a moment hesitate in believing that the inhabitants must have been very considerable. This fact is, however, proved from a *census*

mentioned in the writings of *Empedocles*, a native of this city, who flourished about 448 years B. C., in which the number is stated to have exceeded eight hundred thousand souls ; but so much has modern *Sicily* degenerated, that the population of *Girgenti* now falls short of seventeen thousand, and these are for the greater part poor, and present the most abject and mean appearance.

From all that is recorded of *Agrigentum*, we are induced to believe that it enjoyed its utmost height of grandeur and prosperity during that interval which elapsed between the battle of *Hymere*, which occurred, as before mentioned, 480 years B. C. and its subsequent conquest by the *Carthaginians* 403 years before the same period. The inhabitants of this city then carried on a very considerable trade with the *Africans*, to whom they sold the overplus of the different natural productions of their rich and fertile territory. This epoch was that particular period to which *Diodorus* alludes, when he states that *Agrigentum* was considered one of the most happy residences in the known world, that the different environs of this delightful city were planted with fruit-trees of

every species, with vines of extraordinary height and beauty, and with an immense number of olives.

We shall conclude our description of *Agri-gentum* by inserting some extracts from the works of *Diodorus*, relating to this once splendid city, and also some remarks upon the great luxury of its former inhabitants.

“ Nothing denotes more strongly the luxury of the *Agrigentines*, and their taste for pleasure, than the tombs or monuments erected to those horses who had gained the prize at the course: *Timæus* assures us that he had seen many of those monuments. In the ninety-second *Olympiade*, or about 408 years B. C. *Exanete*, a native of this city, having gained one of the prizes at *Olympus*, made, on his return, a triumphal entry into the city upon a car, accompanied by a most splendid retinue of other cars.

“ The *Agrigentines* educated their infants in a manner which bordered much upon effeminacy; they provided them with habits of an extraordinary fine quality ornamented with

gold, and even furnished their toilettes with caskets of jewels.

“ The richest among the *Agrigentines* in these times was *Gelias*, who had in his house many apartments reserved for such strangers as visited the city : he retained also many servants at his door, whose business it was to invite such persons to enter and partake of their master’s generosity. Many other citizens followed the same profuse hospitality, and received strangers with benevolence and freedom : it is this circumstance which caused *Empedocles*, when speaking of *Agrigentum*, to exclaim, ‘ To every navigator a happy and faithful port ! ’

“ *Polyclite*, in his history, gives a description of a cave in the house of *Gelias*, which he had himself seen : he says there were in this cave three hundred tuns excavated out of the natural stone, and each contained one hundred urns, always filled with wine. He also says that *Gelias*, a man of the most inestimable character, but of very short and slender stature, was sent as ambassador to the city of *Centoripine*, when at his first audience in the assembly, the deputies began to smile,

and could not comprehend how a man said to be possessed of so high a reputation should have a countenance and figure so common: this injudicious treatment *Gelias* immediately resented, by saying, that the *Agrigentines* sent men handsome and well made to illustrious cities, but to those who had not attained any distinction they chose ambassadors like unto himself.

“ This *Gelias* was not the only rich man in *Agrigentum*; *Antisthenes*, surnamed the *Rhodian*, while celebrating the nuptials of his daughter, treated the citizens, and caused the bride to be followed by eight hundred chariots: this equipage was even augmented by a considerable number of cavaliers. He also caused the altars of the gods in the temples, and all those which popular devotion had raised in the streets, to be loaded with wood; in like manner he furnished those citizens who occupied the lower apartments with wood and cuttings of vine, requesting that they would set fire to the same in the various streets the instant they beheld a light in the citadel. This order being carried into execution, the bride then put herself in motion, preceded by an infinite number of persons who carried flambeaux in their

hands : in this way the city became instantaneously illuminated during the middle of the night, and neither the streets nor places were able to contain the multitude of persons drawn together to view this superb spectacle."

CHAPTER XII.

The Volcano of Macaluba.

DURING our residence at *Girgenti* we heard much conversation respecting the existence of a volcano, which emitted earth and water, or, in the language of the country, a species of *fango*, situated about six miles inland, upon the summit of a mountain named *Macaluba*: we accordingly visited this singular phenomenon, of which neither *Brydone* nor *Swinburne* make mention.

Whether the name of volcano belongs exclusively to those mountains which emit fire, or whether it includes all those formed by their own explosions, we shall not now discuss: we shall, however, venture to apply the appellation to this wonderful phenomenon; for, under whatever name it is described, the subject itself will neither become the less singular, nor the less interesting.

This volcano of air, if we may so express ourselves, whose effects resemble those which have fire as their principal agent, has its moments of calmness as well as those of great fermentation and labour ; it produces, too, like other volcanos, earthquakes, subterraneous thunder, and violent eruptions ; which last have, at times, thrown the matter so emitted more than one hundred feet above the summit of the craters.

The base of *Macaluba* is nearly circular, and its height is about two hundred and fifty feet, taken from a valley which surrounds it : this valley is, however, considerably elevated above the level of the sea. Its summit is about half a mile in circumference, and terminated by a plain presenting rather a convex surface ; it is besides extremely steril. On this summit are a considerable number of little conic heights, the largest of which may be about nine feet in diameter ; and on the highest part of these cones, which are in general under five feet, are craters, whose depth we were unable to ascertain, being unprovided with a plumb-line, or any other contrivance by which such a purpose could be effected. The soil appeared externally to be composed of clay, rather dry and cracked, and

the hollow sepulchral noise caused by the action of walking excited our most serious attention, and reminded us that in all probability we were then immediately over an immense gulf of liquid mud, separated only by a thin covering of clay.

The interior of the craters is moist, and out of which there constantly issues a species of brown diluted clay, which, after reaching the height of the lips or highest part, forms itself into little demi-globules; a few moments after this formation has taken place, these globules break, and the confined air which they retained dispels itself; the diluted clay then runs down the flanks of these heights, and extends itself more or less on every side. Upon introducing a pole about twelve feet long into several of the craters, we found it produced a kind of noise not unlike that of distant thunder: we observed upwards of one hundred and fifty of these craters in full action, besides many which had ceased to throw up the argillaceous matter, and our *cicerone* informed us that their number were continually varying, some, as he said, "dying away, and others as constantly breaking forth."

It is generally believed, that in all volcanic eruptions fire acts as the principal agent: in this of *Macaluba*, however, the result is very different; for after minute examination, not only on the summit, but round the sides and base, we could perceive no trace of any such element having been concerned either in the formation or working of this surprising production of nature: neither could we discover the least particle of any matter that had undergone the action of fire. We next immersed our thermometer in several of the craters, naturally expecting to find the temperature much higher than in the open air; but here also we found ourselves greatly deceived, the reverse being the result of the experiment. The thermometer so immersed, about nine o'clock in the morning, stood at 64° according to *Fahrenheit*; but on being exposed to the atmosphere, it immediately rose to 72° : after this experiment, we no longer sought the igneous element.

The name *Macaluba*, by which this mountain is known, is of *Arabian* extraction, the word in that language signifying *overthrowing*.

The way from *Girgenti* to *Macaluba* lies not

through towns and villages, but across steril mountains surrounded with the wildest and most romantic scenery, presenting views extremely grand and beautiful. So ill cultivated and deserted, however, was this particular district, that in our excursion we did not perceive even a solitary cottage ; a country which, in former times, was so abundantly fertile, and so richly cultivated, that it then received the flattering appellation of “ the granary of ancient *Rome*.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Favara—Canigatti—Caltanissetta—Castro Giovanni, the ancient Enna.

WE departed from *Girgenti* at daybreak on the morning of the 4th of May, and proceeded through a fine country to *Favara*, and thence to *Canigatti*, at which place we remained and took some refreshment. The only object of curiosity here is a collection of armour, about the time of Count *Roger*, which is preserved in the castle. The town, although presenting a mean and dejected appearance, is nevertheless populous, containing upwards of eighteen thousand inhabitants: and during our perambulation through it, we were followed, as had been the case in most other inland towns, by a number of curious and idle persons, who seemed to watch our very words and actions.

From *Canigatti* we continued our journey

through an equally well cultivated country, occupied by orchards, vineyards, and corn-fields; even the hedges on each side wore an extremely luxuriant appearance, and frequently presented the aloe, fig, vine, almond, and olive, intermingled together. After traversing for some miles a country of this description, we arrived at *Caltanissetta*; it was nine o'clock, and we were obliged to take up our quarters at the common *osteria*, there being no such establishment as an *albergo* or inn for the accommodation of travellers, although a *paese* containing near twenty thousand inhabitants.

We rose, according to our usual custom, early in the morning, and walking about the environs of the town, which is situated upon rising ground, enjoyed some extensive views of the surrounding country. We also visited the church attached to the convent of *Benedictines*, which certainly merits observation; it was erected about the period when the *Saracens* were in possession of the island, and consequently partakes of their particular style of architecture.

A circumstance highly gratifying to the feelings of an *Englishman* presented itself to our

notice while walking through the fair held in this town, in which we observed, that almost all the goods exposed for sale in the different stalls and shops were of *British* manufacture.

After making our *colazione*, we quitted *Caltanissetta*, and proceeded for about five miles through a country every where presenting views truly rural and romantic. We then ascended, and continued for some time along a ridge of high mountains, following the direction of their various sinuosities: and after having crossed this stupendous chain, we found ourselves in an extensive valley, at the further extremity of which stood *Castro Giovanni*, the ancient *Enna*, with its alpine summit enveloped in the clouds. Traversing this fruitful valley, we crossed and re-crossed several times the river *Salsa*, anciently the *Hymera*.

Having at length reached the foot of this mountain, we began ascending it by an extremely difficult and dangerous pathway; the occasional intervening of rugged parts of the mountain, together with the circumstance of its then raining, presented so many obstacles to our progress, as induced us to descend from our faithful mules. Notwithstanding, however,

the confidence we felt, we did not succeed, as seamen call it, "in making much way;" and the muleteer, well knowing the cause of our difficulty, observed, that by remounting we should not only perform our journey with more ease and facility, but in a much shorter period: we accordingly resumed our seats, and succeeded in gaining the summit of this majestic mountain. The varied and diversified views during the whole of the ascent were in the highest degree romantic, wild, and beautiful.

On approaching *Castro Giovanni*, we were led to imagine, from external appearances, that we were upon the eve of entering an agreeable and pleasant village; but, alas! the anticipation was far from being realised, for it eventually turned out to be the most miserable ill-looking town we had yet seen in *Sicily*. Upon inquiring of the guide as to what *albergo* he intended proceeding to, he candidly replied, that, as so few travellers were in the habit of visiting this mountain, there was certainly no establishment for the reception of those who possessed that curiosity, but he would endeavour to find an asylum where we might remain for the night. We, therefore, amidst the rain which now fell in torrents, wandered about

for some time unsuccessfully, but ultimately gained admittance into a mean and wretched hovel, where we were certainly enabled to dry our apparel, and also to obtain a little supply of provisions, of which we stood much in need.

The pitiless storm continued to rage during the greater part of the night, it then ceased, and on the following morning we rose with the lark, and witnessed from this high region the gradual and silent approach of the fair *Aurora* opening with her rosy fingers the gates of the east, and pouring out the morning dew upon the face of the earth. The weather was now calm and serene, accompanied with that delightful azure sky for which the *Mediterranean* has from time immemorial been so much celebrated, and which enabled us to enjoy a range of the most delightful and most extensive prospects. The summit of this majestic mountain forms an even plain, about five miles in circumference. The atmosphere upon this elevated spot is about 21° below that of the plains.

Castro Giovanni occupies the site of the ancient *Enna*, which, according to the opinion

of the ancients, was the residence of *Ceres*, daughter of *Saturn* and *Cybele*, and who was placed in the rank of immortals for having originally taught man the useful art of agriculture: it is however certain that improvements in the cultivation of the earth first took place in *Sicily*, at the time when it was considered as being under the immediate protection of this divinity. *Enna*, in former ages, enjoyed a great degree of celebrity, not only from the splendid magnificence displayed in its temples and other public edifices, but also from the great wealth possessed by the inhabitants.

Several of the most authentic historians of antiquity, *Diodorus*, *Livy*, and more especially *Cicero*, have left in their writings ample descriptions of this once celebrated city. *Livy* mentions that *Enna* was erected upon the summit of a very high mountain, quite insulated, and on all sides extremely steep: it is thus that he emphatically describes its situation: "In excelso loco et prærupto undique sita, inexpugnabilis est."

Castro Giovanni is, at the present period, considered almost impregnable: its elevation is

upwards of four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the approaches on all sides are extremely difficult. The inhabitants, notwithstanding its height, enjoy a great accommodation in possessing several copious springs of pure and excellent water, and, what is still more extraordinary, there exists a beautiful lake situated close to the town. *Diodorus* observes upon this subject, that “near *Enna* is a lake, whose banks are sprinkled with violets and other aromatic flowers, which very sensibly impregnate the air.”

The incident that most contributed to increase the veneration that the ancients entertained for *Enna*, was the belief which then prevailed, that it was the birthplace of the goddess *Ceres*, and that the rape of *Proserpine*, her fair daughter, occurred in the immediate vicinity. This event formed one of the most undoubted facts in *Pagan* mythology, and has been the subject of an immense number of compositions, as well by the ancients as the moderns, in basso-relievo, cameo, intaglio, and painting.

No author has been more correct in delineating the principal features of *Enna* than

Cicero. The following details, extracted from his works, will no doubt be perused with pleasure.

“ The most ancient traditions, the writings of the *Greeks*, and a crowd of monuments, attest that *Sicily* was from time immemorial consecrated to *Ceres* and *Proserpine*: other people refuse not to believe; but as to the *Sicilians*, they entertain so intimate a persuasion, that they conceive this faith inherent in their minds, and that it is a sentiment with which they are born. They also firmly believe, that it is to *Ceres* and her daughter *Proserpine* they are indebted for fruit: they gave to the daughter the name of *Proserpine*, after a wood near *Enna*. This city is situated in the centre of *Sicily*, and is hence called *Umbilicus Siciliae*; it is built upon a mountain greatly elevated, and absolutely insulated; and there is upon the summit an even plain, watered with various springs: it is steep on all sides, consequently the access is rendered very difficult.

“ They render a particular worship in *Sicily* to the *Ennean Ceres*, and not only the inhabitants of this country, but even those of other nations, entertain for the goddess the

greatest veneration: if we find that a temple has been erected at *Athens*, in gratitude for her having remained there some time, and taught them the art of agriculture, with how much more zeal ought they not to celebrate her worship in the place which gave her birth. We know that in the most critical circumstances of the *Roman* republic, after the death of *Tiberius Gracchus*, when the greatest dangers seemed on the eve of breaking forth, the consuls, *P. Mutius* and *L. Calphurnius*, were directed by the conscript fathers to consult the book of the *Sybils*, whence they were instructed to present themselves before *Ceres*; and, although there was a very superb temple dedicated to this goddess in *Rome*, the senate, nevertheless, sent ten deputies to that of *Enna*, where the worship of this deity was so much revered, and had been so long consecrated by antiquity, that in going there, they thought less of presenting themselves in the temple than before the goddess herself."

We find in *Diodorus* a magnificent description of the temple of *Enna*, which, according to this historian, was constructed by *Gelon*, tyrant of *Syracusa*. They preserved within this sacred

edifice a colossal statue of *Ceres* in marble, and another in bronze, of very great antiquity: in the vestibule there was likewise a statue of the goddess, holding in one hand the image of *Victory*. There is no doubt that the two first statues were those which *Cicero* alludes to as being two *chefs-d'œuvre* of the greatest statuaries of antiquity; and which were of a proportion so elevated, that their grandeur protected them from falling into the hands of the rapacious *Verres*, who, however, took away the image of *Victory*, notwithstanding the representations of the then priests of *Ceres*, and the cries of the inhabitants.

The *Roman* orator, alluding to this impious sacrilege, says, "How can he sustain the recital of these impieties, when myself, who only recal the event, am so much moved, that I am seized with horror? for the idea of this sacred temple, of the solemnity of the place, and of the particular worship there offered, presents itself in vivid colours before my eyes. The day on which I entered *Enna*, the priests of *Ceres* came to meet me with their mitres and crowns of vervain, accompanied by the principal citizens; and during the time that I harangued them, it was not only with tears

they were moved. I heard them neither complain of the tyranny of *Verres*, of the loss of their property, nor of his unjust judgments; they only demanded that the punishment of the prætor should be left to the divinity *Ceres*, the antiquity of her worship, and the sanctity of her temple: at last their grief became so general, that they exclaimed, another *Pluto* had visited *Enna*, not only to possess *Proserpine*, but also to carry off *Ceres* herself!"

We visited the castle, which appeared of *Roman* origin, and, although decaying very fast, is yet deemed sufficiently strong to serve as a place of confinement for state prisoners. After having passed through several of the wards, we ascended the battlements, and were highly gratified with the extensive and grand prospects that presented themselves on every side. We next proceeded to the site of the celebrated temple of *Ceres*, of which splendid edifice there now remains only a large square stone, supposed to have formed part of the original altar of this once magnificent building.

CHAPTER XIV.

*Lake of Proserpine—Piazza—Calatagirone—
Modica.*

WE quitted *Castro Giovanni* willingly, not only on account of departing from a place where we had experienced so many inconveniences, but with imaginations highly elated in the hope of soon arriving in that valley where the celebrated lake of *Proserpine* is situated. The pathway by which we descended from the mountain was, if possible, more steep and difficult than that by which it had been previously approached on the opposite side. After having reached the bottom, our way lay through a romantic valley, which, after traversing for about five miles, we beheld the so much desired lake, opening before us in a manner truly picturesque, decked with all its beauties, real as well as poetical.

This lake still retains its original name of *Proserpine*, and is about four miles in circum-

ference ; the surrounding banks rise gradually into eminences covered with luxuriant foliage, and, although not realizing the poetic description of the ancient writers, it nevertheless presents some charming prospects : the banks are likewise clothed with aromatic flowers and shrubs.

Cicero, referring to this enchanting neighbourhood, says, “ Not far distant from *Enna* is a lake, whose banks are covered with aromatic flowers, and which is almost concealed by surrounding woods ; and near its borders is an extremely profound grotto, from whence it is said *Pluto* issued with his car when he forcibly conveyed *Proserpine* to the infernal regions : in fact, it may be asserted, that no spot could more effectually bring to the imagination the recollection of such a circumstance.”

Ovid, likewise alluding to this celebrated lake, thus expresses himself :

Sylva coronat aquas, cingens latus omne ; suisque
Frondebis, ut velo, Phœbeos submovet ignes.
Frigora dant rami, Tyrios humus humida flores.
Perpetuum ver est.

A wood crowns the lake, surrounding it on every side, and bears off as with a veil the scorching heat of Phœbus. The boughs yield a refreshing shade, and the moist ground is enamelled with flowers. Perpetual spring.

OVID, MET. Lib. 5.

Our great epic *Milton*, in his noble picture of the garden of *Eden*, also alludes to the mythological story of the rape of *Proserpine* in the following beautiful lines :

“ Not that fair field
Of *Enna*, where *Proserpine* gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy *Dis*
Was gather'd, which cost *Ceres* all that pain
To seek her thro' the world.”

PARADISE LOST, BOOK IV.

Having gratified ourselves with admiring this enchanting spot, of which a faint idea is given in the accompanying view, we next visited the grotto alluded to by *Cicero*, which most certainly presents an extremely gloomy appearance.

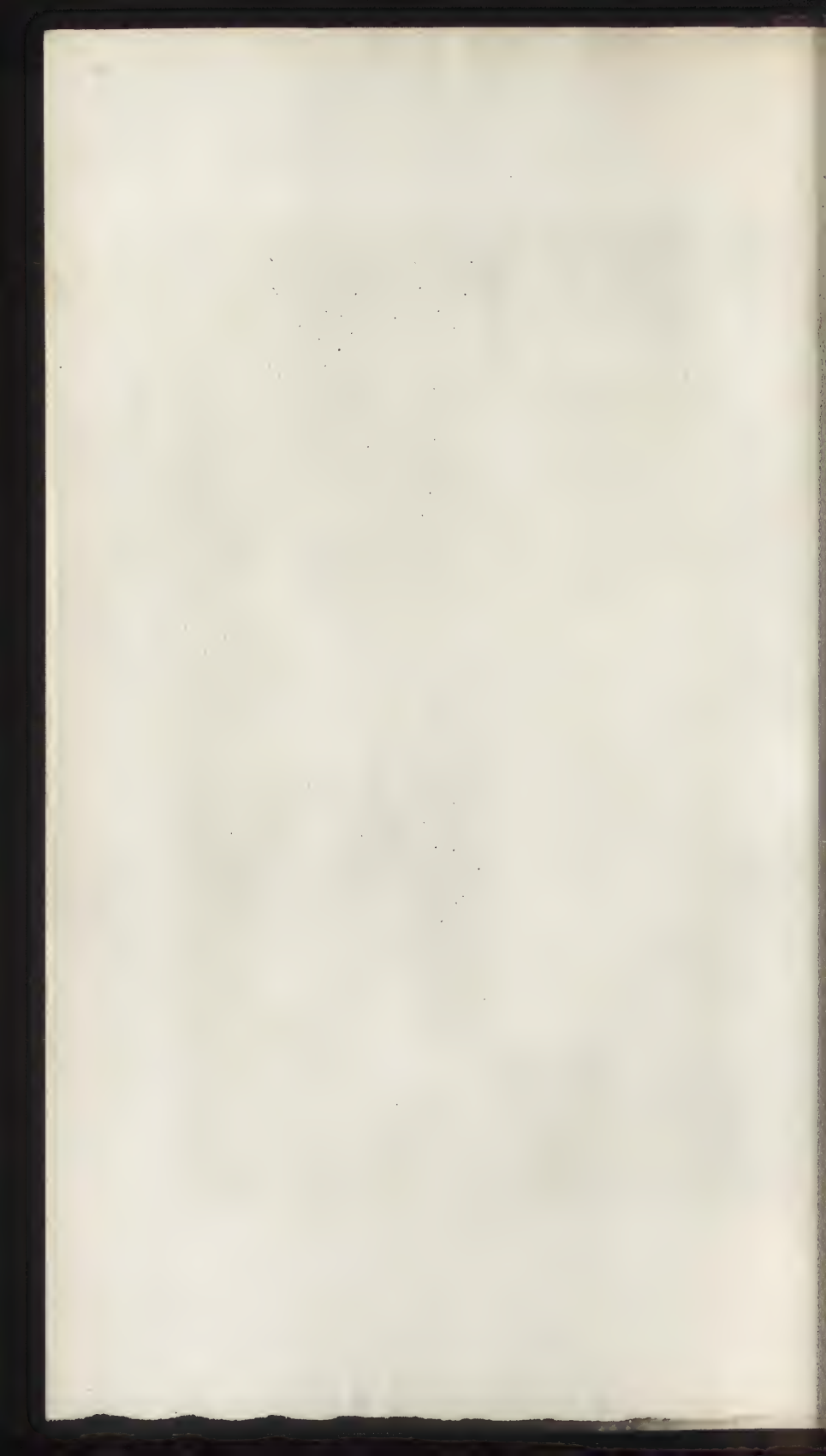
We now bade adieu to *Proserpine* and her beloved *Cyane*, and proceeded over a country composed alternately of hill and dale, till we arrived in the neighbourhood of *Piazza*. On crossing one of those rural vales, we beheld a



J. C. Smith del.

Lake of PROSERPINE.

Lake of Proserpine, Lake of the Proserpine, Lake of the Proserpine, Lake of the Proserpine.



fine majestic eagle near a lonely cot, apparently watching some tame fowls: as our way lay by the cottage, we consequently disturbed this monarch of the air, who, soaring leisurely away, alighted upon some rising ground immediately before us: here we again observed him for some time pompously treading the luxuriant carpet of nature.

If the general appearance and beauty of the country in the vicinity of the ancient *Enna* fall short of the fancied idea which is formed from reading the descriptions of the writers of antiquity; if the fertility, although great, assimilate not with that which is expected, we can at least assert, and with great confidence, that the environs of *Piazza* surpass every thing possible to imagine, in abundance as well as fertility.

Piazza is built upon an eminence quite insulated. There is nothing remarkable in the buildings, either public or private; but the town very justly prides itself on the richness of its territory and the great beauty of the contiguous country, every kind of vegetation thriving upon this fertile spot: it is surrounded on all sides by extremely fruitful valleys, in

which vegetables of every kind are almost spontaneously produced, not only in sufficient quantities to supply the inhabitants, but also enough to enable them to carry on a lucrative trade with several neighbouring cities less favoured by nature.

In these rurally interspersed valleys are many nut groves, which occupy situations contiguous to the numerous rivulets in the neighbourhood. These groves form charming promenades for the inhabitants of *Piazza*, not only on account of their freshness, but of the cool shady retreat which they offer, even during the sultry heat of the meridian sun.

The garden most worthy of remark is that attached to the old *Capuchin* convent: art has succeeded in this delightful retreat in combining all that could be expected from nature, if embellished in her most luxuriant and enchanting forms. It is not in the style of an *English* garden, much less in that of a *French* one; nothing has been done by system, no regular plan has been adopted; they have only encouraged the circulation of the water, the growth of the trees, the multiplication of the various plants, and the garden has been ef-

fectually made: fruit-trees of almost every species are intermingled with the majestic oak, the mountain pine, the slender poplar, and the stately cypress, while the vines group and entwine themselves round the nut and the orange, and form festoons in passing from one to the other.

Every thing within this enchanting spot is in apparent confusion, yet every thing is perfectly united, because nature is harmonious in all her works, whenever left to follow her own course. The eye reposes itself agreeably in every part of this delicious garden; it is nowhere fatigued either by the monotony of form or the uniformity of shadow: the heat is tempered by the introduction of water, here elevating itself in fountains, there falling in cascades, and every where circulating in serpentine rills; to these natural and artificial beauties may be added the number of nightingales, whose sweet and melodious notes render this delightful retreat a terrestrial paradise.

The country in the vicinity of *Piazza*, besides corn, produces also many other productions equally valuable: flax and hemp are cultivated with success, and also a vast quantity of fruit:

the nut-trees are well attended to, and the vines and olives are of a good quality, and in great abundance.

After quitting *Piazza*, we proceeded for some miles through a richly-cultivated country to *Calatagirone*, one of the most populous and well-built inland towns in *Sicily*; and we were so fortunate as to meet with a decent *osteria*, situated in the market-place, which afforded us tolerably good accommodation; in fact, much better than we had met with since leaving *Palermo*.

Calatagirone is situated, like most *Sicilian* towns, upon an insulated eminence, and overlooks an extensive tract of country. We remained in this place more for the purpose of recruiting ourselves, than for any thing remarkable that it contained; even the churches are very indifferent. In the course of our perambulation, perceiving some musicians exercising their profession at the entrance of a church attached to a female convent, and the entrance itself decorated with artificial flowers, we were induced to enter, when we found the church also ornamented in a similar manner.

One of the most holy and religious fathers who was in attendance upon the convent, perceiving we were foreigners, immediately approached, and explained to us the particulars of the ceremony upon the eve of taking place within this sacred building. He began by stating that two young ladies, daughters of a nobleman, having finished their novitiate, were to take the veil on the succeeding morning, and that it was the custom to decorate the church and employ music on the preceding day, in order to welcome the friends of the novitiates who came at that solemn and interesting moment to converse with and finally to bid them adieu. These two unfortunate ladies, if we may be allowed so to express ourselves, occupied the sacristy, separated by lattice-work only from the body of the church; and it was through this they discoursed with their friends. The sacristy was also embellished with a degree of splendour almost approaching eastern magnificence, and the novitiates were most splendidly and elegantly attired, and seemed as if they were upon the point of joining their future husbands at the marriage table: to this table, indeed, they were certainly to be conducted, but it was to the church they were to be united.

It is thus that the illusive welfare of the church, in drawing to itself the fairest and most beautiful females, has in part depopulated this fruitful and once well-peopled island; and, if this destructive and baneful policy is still permitted to make those gigantic strides which it has for some years been taking, it will finally accomplish that which it has so effectually begun, namely, the ruin of the country. Generally speaking, a very considerable part of the population, some accounts say an eighth, but our opinion, deduced from personal observation, and from information derived from many members of the different religious orders, fix it at about one-sixteenth, is attached to the service of the church, which certainly is a sufficient reason why the inhabitants of the whole island of *Sicily* at the present day fall short of the number formerly contained within the walls of one of its ancient cities.

Chance, or rather the young and beautiful females who were soon to be eternally immured within these sacred walls, were the cause of our visiting the church several times during the day: we felt so much interest for the fate of those innocent and lovely beings, who were in

all probability forced by their unnatural parents to enter the religious order, that, if at that particular moment any thing had presented itself, which could, in the slightest degree, have been instrumental towards effecting their escape, we should enthusiastically have embraced it, although all the horrors of the most holy office, the Inquisition, would have followed close upon our footsteps.

We set off from *Calatagirone* early in the morning, and passed through a fertile and richly-cultivated plain: our way lay close to a wood of cork-trees, and we passed the *Durillo*, a small river, three times. We now ascended an extremely high chain of mountains, upon whose summit stood *Chiaramonte*, where we remained a short time and took some refreshment.

After quitting this place, our road still lay for miles upon the mountain heights, which every where presented a stony, steril, and deserted appearance, until we arrived at the valley of *Ragusa*. This valley is very strait, with sides extremely rugged and steep; a river of the same name runs through it, whose banks are overgrown and almost concealed with the

most luxuriant and beautiful foliage, and its appearance altogether was certainly romantic in the highest degree.

Leaving the valley of *Ragusa*, we traversed a country possessing the same stony and steril appearance, and ultimately reached *Modica*, which is likewise situated in a strait and steep valley. As a matter of course, we proceeded, after our long and inconvenient journey, immediately to the only *osteria* the town could boast, which was wretched and dirty in the extreme; even the way to our chamber lay through one previously occupied by a mother pig and her young progeny. Our beds were composed of soiled chopped straw, which was strewed upon hurdles, for the purpose of keeping our weary bones from the cold tile paving, and preserving us in some measure from the vermin, with which the room, literally speaking, swarmed.

CHAPTER XV.

Valley of Ispica—Noto.

ON quitting *Modica* we proceeded towards the valley of *Ispica*, through a country wholly covered with stones; and some small rain, or rather a species of heavy dew having fallen during the night, our journey over such unfrequented mountain tracks was, of course, rendered extremely difficult. Our mules, although the best animals for this kind of travelling, having frequently stumbled, it was deemed more prudent to alight and walk; we however had not gone more than fifty paces before we ourselves fell, which circumstance induced us to remount, being then perfectly convinced that the feet of those animals were much safer than our own. After having passed over some miles of this stony and deserted country, we approached the brink of a deep and narrow valley, whose appearance was as

fruitful and luxuriant as the country through which we had passed was wild and uncultivated.

After descending into this romantic valley by means of an extremely steep path, we were highly gratified with that grand and magnificent, nay, almost alpine scenery, which presented itself on every side. We next entered the numerous chambers excavated in the rocks forming the sides of this interesting and natural recess, and which were in many places from eight to ten stories in height: these subterraneous retreats were about twenty feet in length, eight in width, and seven in height. Opposite the door in most of them we observed a kind of niche, in which was a ring chiseled out of the natural stone, in all probability for the purpose of attaching a goat, or some other domestic animal; and near the entrance was a basin likewise formed in the stone. Immediately above the entrance was a bevilled opening through the external face or wall, apparently made for the introduction of light and air when these gloomy caves were closed; and in almost all the chambers we discovered a recess in one of the sides about six feet long and four wide, which evidently served the an-

cient inhabitants of these gloomy grottos as their place of rest.

In several of these chambers were various rings in the walls, which appeared to have been made for the purpose of suspending different utensils; while in others were wide grooves worked in the stone to serve in lieu of shelves. We passed through upwards of three miles of this extraordinary valley always finding the same excavations, in the same order, and under the same form; some, however, had a second chamber excavated behind the first, while in others we observed a round opening, by which a communication was preserved with the floor immediately above. In this opening were holes, apparently made for the insertion of steps, in order more easily to ascend and descend from one to the other.

We also discovered many tombs excavated out of the natural stone, and in the interior of them were fragments of bones almost in a state of petrefaction, as well as various pieces of vases composed of a red-coloured earth.

The immense number of chambers existing in this valley, induce most persons to suppose

that it had originally been inhabited by a numerous colony. History, indeed, informs us, that the *Lestrigons* and *Sicanians* were the first inhabitants of *Sicily*: the *Lestrigons* have been described as men of gigantic stature, whose origin was utterly unknown; and the *Sicanians* as a colony originally from the southern coast of *Spain*. We likewise learn from the same source, that they were unceasingly disputing the possession of the fertile and abundant plains of *Lentini*, and the country in the immediate vicinity of *Etna*: at length the *Sicanians* were obliged to yield, and the *Lestrigons* chased them away towards the south. *Ispica* is situated precisely in this direction, when considered topographically with respect to *Etna*, and it was therefore in all probability to this valley that they retired.

The genius of man naturally leads him, not only to imitate that which he has at any time seen, but also to seek, by every possible means, to possess those comforts of life to which he has at any former period been accustomed; for instance, when an *European* colony proceeds into a desert country, they immediately set about constructing houses more or less resembling those in which they were born, in





L. Vank sculpt.

preference to residing in the open air. Ought we not then to refer the formation of these chambers to that period of antiquity, when the inhabitants of *Sicily* consisted wholly of pastors and shepherds?

The circumstance of finding many *Sicilian* peasants still inhabiting these rude excavations astonished us greatly: their appearance seemed as wild and savage as ever their ancestors could have been; they lived apparently in the same manner upon milk, fruit, and vegetables, the natural productions of this fruitful spot. They kept their goats in the same situation, and attached to the same rings; they rested in the same places, and seemed frightened at the approach of travellers: in fact, the children could not have expressed more anxiety, or have been more alarmed, if wild beasts had entered their peaceful and retired abode, than they were in seeing strangers enter the chambers and examine this most extraordinary valley. A slight sketch of part of this truly romantic valley is here introduced, for the purpose of more fully illustrating what has been said on the subject.

After spending nearly the whole day in

this extremely interesting place, we next proceeded through a country still as stony and uncultivated as that which we had just traversed. We arrived, however, early in the evening at *Noto*, the capital of one of three divisions of *Sicily*, where we must have remained during the night in the street, or in other words, in an *osteria* presenting the most wretched appearance, had it not been for the polite attention of a nobleman, who kindly introduced us to the *padre rettore* of the convent of *Dominicans*.

Noto is situated upon an eminence overlooking a richly-cultivated valley of the same name; the town was built about one hundred and fifty years since, after the former city, which stood a few miles off upon an eminence still more elevated, was completely destroyed by an earthquake. The principal buildings which embellish this city, such as the palaces, convents, and churches, are designed with more taste than any we had then seen, and strictly after the *Grecian* style of architecture.

Our principal object in remaining here was for the purpose of viewing the celebrated museum of Don *Antonio Astuto*, Baron of *Fargione*. This museum contains a most superb

series of *Greco Siculo* medallions, esteemed the most considerable and most complete existing at the present day; of *Grecian* coins and medals; of those of *Rome* previously to the establishment of consuls; of all the consular families; and a valuable collection of the *Roman* emperors. There are besides numerous *Saracenic* coins, a splendid set of the kings and queens of *Sicily* from the expulsion of the *Saracens* to the present period; and also an extensive series of the medals of the popes, from the time of *Martin* the fifth. The various medallions and coins in this magnificent collection exceed six thousand, and are in an excellent state of preservation.

This museum likewise contains several antique busts, among which are two extremely fine, of *Plato* and *Socrates*, as well as many statues and tripods. We were highly entertained also in looking over the superb collection illustrating the natural history of *Sicily*, including the diversified lava of *Etna*, and the *Lipari* isles. The baron was extremely civil and polite, and devoted the whole day in explaining the medallions, coins, and antiquities, within his justly celebrated museum.

During our stay in this town we were invited to an evening *conversazione* at the palace of the nobleman previously alluded to, which of course we accepted: from the conversation that passed, it soon appeared that he was a great admirer of the principles of the *English* constitution; and that about seven years since, he had taken an active part in endeavouring to introduce the same, with some few alterations, into his native country. The attempt, for a time, partially succeeded, and the patriotic party had even gone so far as to have formed a representative assembly, something resembling our House of Commons; but in consequence of the then sudden removal of the *English* troops to the south of *Spain*, their exertions which, up to this period, had been secretly supported by the *English* commandant, entirely failed, and most of those noblemen and gentlemen who had shewn themselves zealous in effecting so desirable an alteration in their ill-digested form of government, were immediately ordered to quit *Palermo*, and retire to their country seats. Such had been the fate of this truly patriotic nobleman, whose hospitality was attentive even to our domestic comfort, and who sent one of his servants to

attend upon us during our stay in the convent, as well as furnished us with wine made from grapes, the produce of his own estates: this wine was of a light red colour, and possessed a most delicious flavour, not unlike that of *Burgundy*.

The *Dominican* convent, in which we had been so kindly received, was well built, very extensive, and possessed, in a great degree, more the splendid appearance of a palace than of an humble and religious building. We enjoyed several conversations with the prior and other members of the establishment, who were intelligent sensible men; and who behaved in the most friendly and polite manner during our short residence within their sacred walls.

We quitted *Noto* early in the morning, and proceeded for a few miles along a good road to *Avolo*, a pleasant village situated near the sea; where our attention was attracted by two very fine palm-trees which ornamented the gardens of an elegant villa. We then continued along a most delightful plain, occasionally interspersed with rural cottages spread amidst its surrounding groves of almonds and vineyards, till we came to the river *Gallo*, the banks of which

presented an appearance extremely beautiful, being lined with the oleander in full blossom, and with numerous aromatic plants, whose delicious odour impregnated the very atmosphere.

After traversing this plain, we approached the *Anapus*, and ultimately entered the once splendid and magnificent *Syracusa*. We then proceeded to the *locanda nobile*, situated in one of the principal streets, which became our headquarters during the period we remained within this enchanting city.

CHAPTER XVI.

SYRACUSA.

*General Description of the ancient City by Cicero
—Fountain of Arethusa—Temple of Minerva
—Temple of Diana—Castle—Amphitheatre—
Theatre.*

THE first object that attracted our attention in approaching the magnificent *Syracusa* was the immense port, whose shores we traversed previously to entering the city, and which brought to our recollection the mighty actions that had taken place in its immediate neighbourhood, during the successive struggles which had occurred between the inhabitants of *Syracusa*, *Athens*, *Rome*, and *Carthage*.

Before we proceed to any detailed descriptions, we shall venture to indulge in a brief sketch of the topography of *Syracusa* and its

vicinity, which may serve to illustrate our subsequent account of this famed city *.

* *Explanation of the accompanying Plan.*

- A. *Sinus Syracusanus*, or the great port.
- B. *Portus Marmoreus*, or the lesser port.
- C. *Ortygia*.
- D. *Neapolis*.
- E. *Epipolæ*.
- F. *Tyche*.
- G. *Acradina*.

No. 1. The rock *Plemmyrium*.

2. Remains of the temple of *Jupiter*.

3. Fountain of *Cyane*, in whose stream the *Papyrus* plant is spontaneously produced.

4. River *Anapus*.

5. Arsenal.

6. Fountain of *Arethusa*.

7. The castle.

8. The chain which extended across the entrance from the castle to *Plemmyrium*.

9. Remains of the temple of *Minerva*, now the cathedral.

10. Remains of the temple of *Diana*.

11. Amphitheatre.

12. Theatre.

13. Street of tombs.

14. *Latomiæ*, in which the grotto, commonly called the ear of *Dionysius*, is situated.

15. Catacombs.

16. Remains of the ancient *cloacæ*, or sewers.



TOPOGRAPHICAL
PLAN
of the
Ancient
SYRACUSA

W. H. Sturt del.



From the description of ancient authors, and more especially of *Cicero*, there can be little doubt that *Syracusa* was one of the most powerful cities of antiquity: it was divided into four quarters, entirely differing from each other, and separated by elevated walls. The following extracts from the orations of *Cicero* bear even now such evident marks of correctness, as induce us to commence our account by their insertion.

“ It has been often reported, that *Syracusa* is the largest and most magnificent city in *Greece*; and what has been said, Oh! conscript fathers, is perfectly true. On whatever side the city is approached, it presents not only an appearance strongly fortified, but also extremely beautiful. The two ports are almost inclosed by their natural situation, and although the union of their waters forms the island, yet the communication with the city is

17. *Latomiæ*, now the garden of the convent of *Capuchins*.
18. Aqueduct.
19. Remains of a castle.
20. *Latomiæ* of *Tyche*.
21. The fortress *Euryale*.
22. Wall erected during the reign of *Dionysius*.

maintained by means of a bridge thrown across this strait. It is a city so extended, that it may be said to be composed of four; the first, named *Ortygia*, is that island above mentioned, which not only incloses the ports and advances into the sea, but forms the entrance to each of them; it is the part where the palace inhabited by *Hiero* is situated, and which building now forms the residence of the *Roman* prætor. It contains many temples, but principally two of very superior beauty, the one consecrated to *Diana*, and the other, which, previously to the arrival of *Verres*, was very much ornamented, to *Minerva*. At the extremity of this island is a fountain of pure spring water, which bears the name of *Arethusa*: it is of considerable extent, and contains a great number of fish: this fountain would be covered with the waves of the sea, if they were not prevented by the erection of a stone wall.

“ The second part of *Syracusa* is called *Acradina*: this division contains a spacious square, fine galleries, a *prytaneum*, a magnificent hall for the meetings of the council, a superb temple dedicated to the *Olympic Jove*, and a very large street running from one end to the other, with many transverse streets,

in which the various private houses are situated.

“ The third division, *Tyche*, encloses within its circuit an ancient temple consecrated to *Fortune*, many other sacred buildings, and an immense *gymnasium*: this quarter is by far the most populous.

“ The fourth, or remaining division of the city, because it was the last built, is called *Neapolis*: there is upon the heights a very large theatre, two superb temples, the one dedicated to *Ceres*, the other to *Proserpine*, and a grand and beautiful statue of *Apollo*, surnamed the *Tenemite*.”

It hence appears, that the ancient *Syracusa* consisted of four divisions, whose names were *Ortygia*, *Acradina*, *Tyche*, and *Neapolis*. *Ortygia* comprehended the island situated at the entrance to the ports, and was always considered as the fortress: the residences of their princes were also in this quarter. *Acradina* was certainly the most considerable, and also the most magnificent in regard to public buildings. *Tyche*, so named from a temple dedicated to *Fortune*, was the most populous; and lastly, *Neapolis*,

which was very extensive, and formed the western extremity of the city.

The boundary of the ancient walls formed a circuit, according to *Strabo*, of one hundred and eighty *stadia*, or twenty-two miles and a half, including the *Epipolæ*, a suburb constructed to the westward of the *Neapolis*, upon a spot that not only overlooked, but commanded the whole city. The *Epipolæ* was terminated by an almost impregnable fortress, called *Euryale*, which is mentioned by many of the ancient historians, and more especially by *Livy*, who, in his account of the siege of *Syracusa* by the *Romans*, says, "that after *Marcellus* had made himself master of the city, he was fearful of besieging the *Euryale*."

The great port of *Syracusa* is about five miles in circumference, and to insure its safety, as well as to obstruct the approach of an enemy, the ancients placed a strong chain from the extreme point of the island, where the present castle stands, to the opposite rock, *Plemmyrium*, a distance of about half a mile, where they also constructed a fortress, some traces of which are yet discernible. On the other side of *Ortygia* is the lesser port, called *Portus Mar-*

moreus, in consequence of the bottom having been originally paved with marble.

Ortygia was formerly considered the most important part, because it commanded the entrances to the ports. The tyrants, perfectly sensible of this advantage, established their residences in this division, and made, from time to time, considerable additions to the fortifications; and even the *Romans*, when masters of *Syracusa*, regarding its situation in the same light, prohibited any native citizen from residing in this portion of the city.

One of the greatest objects of curiosity existing in *Syracusa*, and which we were extremely anxious to behold, is the famous fountain of *Arethusa*. The goddess *Diana*, according to classical mythology, wishing to protect her favourite companion from the pursuits of *Alpheus*, transformed her into this fountain; but the gods, sensible of his misfortunes in consequence of the change, metamorphosed him in like manner into a river, and united his waters with those of the fair nymph, who was then reluctantly compelled to yield to his amorous pursuit.

Virgil, in referring to this celebrated fountain, thus expresses himself:

Sicanio prætenta sinu jacet insula contra
Plemmyriam undosum : nomen dicere priores
Ortygiam, *Alpheus* fama est huc, elidis amnem,
 Occultas egisse vias subter mare ; qui nunc
 Ore, *Arethusa*, tuo *Siculis* confunditur undis.

Right o'er-against *Plemmyrium's* wat'ry strand,
 There lies an isle once call'd th' *Ortygian* land.
Alpheus, as old fame reports, has found
 From *Greece* a secret passage under ground,
 By love to beauteous *Arethusa* led,
 And, mingling here, they roll in the same sacred bed.

DRYDEN.

This sacred fountain of *Arethusa*, who was so beloved by *Diana*, to whom divine honours were offered, and upon whose shrine even *Hercules* sacrificed, still exists under circumstances nearly similar to what are indicated by *Cicero*: “ *Fons qui fluctu aquæ totus operiretur nisi, munitione ac mole lapidum a mari disjunctus esset.*”

Notwithstanding the lamentable state to which this fountain is now reduced, from having become the public resort of the laun-

dresses of *Syracusa*, yet we cannot be surprised at its celebrity, when we contemplate such an abundant spring of fresh water so near the sea ; in fact, the spring is so prolific, that it rather resembles the birth of a large river than the source of a simple fountain. According to ancient writers, a large basin formerly surrounded it, containing an immense number of fish, which no person presumed to disturb, for fear of offending *Diana*, who was then considered the tutelary divinity of this city. The palace occupied by *Verres* was likewise situated near this celebrated fountain, as well as that most delightful promenade which he converted into a place of public licentiousness.

Agreeably to our plan of examining the various antiquities in one quarter of the city before we commenced those of another, we of course remained in *Ortigia*, but we sought in vain for the palace of *Dionysius*, his famed gardens, and his tomb ; for the celebrated baths of *Daphnis*, son of *Mercury*, and a *Sicilian* nymph, inventor of pastoral poetry ; that *Daphnis*, who so charmed *Diana* by the recital of his verses : these buildings, alas ! have entirely disappeared : not a fragment of them now remaining !

Our attention was directed in the next place to the temple of *Minerva*, the only ancient monument existing in *Ortygia*, which was injudiciously converted, during the twelfth century, into the cathedral of the modern city: the greater part of the lateral columns and entablature still remain; which are composed of the *Doric* order, fluted, and without base.

We learn from *Atheneus*, that a tower was erected above the portico of this temple, on which hung a resplendent shield highly polished. This shield was visible a great distance at sea, and the prevailing custom then was, that the moment vessels, which had previously departed from the port, ceased to behold it, the mariners threw their votive offerings into the sea, in order to obtain the joint favour and protection of *Neptune* and *Minerva*.

Among the various works of art which *Cicero* accuses *Verres* of having carried away from *Syracusa* were all those statues and paintings which once ornamented the interior of this temple. The battles of *Agathocles* were represented upon the walls in twenty-seven paintings of the highest perfection, and there were besides portraits of all the princes who

had reigned in *Sicily*, all of which *Verres* caused to be taken away, as well as the doors of this sacred edifice, which were composed of the richest materials. So celebrated, indeed, were these doors, that numerous strangers were attracted from *Greece* and *Rome* to behold and admire them: the ornaments in gold, ivory, and bronze, were most exquisitely wrought.

We next visited the ruins, if such they may be called, of the temple of *Diana*, the first elevated in *Syracusa*, but which are now so enveloped and obscured by modern buildings, as scarcely to be visible; we succeeded, however, by entering several private dwellings, in obtaining a view of some of the columns and parts of the entablature, which are of the *Doric* order and fluted.

On the extremity of the island next the sea is situated the castle, which was rebuilt in its present form in the eleventh century. Many parts, however, of the original *Grecian* fortress still remain, and in those parts which were reconstructed, columns, entablatures, and other fragments of ancient edifices are very distinguishable. This castle is very advantageously

situated, and effectually commands the entrance to the ports.

After having traversed the island, which comprises, as we have before mentioned, the modern *Syracusa* ; we then proceeded through *Acradina*, which presented neither antique ruins nor any thing of sufficient curiosity to attract our attention.

Upon entering the quarter *Neapolis*, the first object of antiquity that presented itself to our notice was the ancient amphitheatre, of an oval form, with a longitudinal diameter of three hundred and sixteen feet, and a transverse one of two hundred and fourteen feet. The construction of the principal parts of this edifice, such as the passages of communication, the cells wherein the wild beasts were confined, the *arena*, the *podium*, and seats, were formed out of the natural or living rock. Notwithstanding the decay which devouring time has effected, enough yet remains to form an idea of the grandeur and magnificence which the ancients displayed in the formation of their public edifices. Its construction may certainly be attributed to the *Romans*, the

Grecians entertaining an antipathy and even horror at the barbarous custom of introducing as a species of amusement such sanguinary spectacles as generally took place within this particular class of buildings.

Near this once splendid amphitheatre exists an ancient reservoir or cistern, about fifty-seven feet long, twenty-three feet wide, and ten feet high, formed evidently out of the natural rock ; and in the immediate neighbourhood are also the remains of the aqueduct which originally supplied it with water. The situation of this reservoir, so contiguous to the amphitheatre, agrees with the accounts given by several ancient writers, of its having been the invariable custom of the *Romans* to form such a building, so that they might possess a sufficient supply of water for the use of those gladiators who retired with their lives from the combats, which they were so unmercifully and cruelly obliged to encounter.

Not far distant from these ruins is the ancient theatre, which, although in a state of great decay, still presents a grand and imposing appearance : we reclined for some time on the seats, and enjoyed the most delightful

prospect, not only of the modern city and distant sea, but also of the luxuriant plains, watered by the limpid stream of the *Anapus*, lying immediately at our feet: in fact, the situation of this theatre is really enchanting. The different seats and staircases are for the most part perfect, as well as the *præcinctiones*, or barriers, that were introduced for the purpose of preserving each division of seats separate: foundations were also apparent immediately behind the exterior or highest seat, which indicated that a covered *loggia* or *corridor* had originally surrounded this superb edifice.

Upon one of the *præcinctiones* of the theatre is an ancient *Greek* inscription almost in a perfect state, the subject of which has created much discussion in the literary world. The inscription is as follows:

“ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑΣ ΦΙΛΙΣΤΙΔΟΣ.”

“PHILISTIDES QUEEN.”

Although history is completely silent with respect to a queen of this name ever having reigned at *Syracusa*, yet we are justified in concluding, not only from the inscription, but

also from the numerous medals preserved in the different museums of *Europe*, that this celebrated female was the wife of one of the tyrants of *Syracusa*. *Philistides* is generally represented on the medallions as possessing a serene and lovely countenance: she must have enjoyed a great reputation, as well as have reigned during a long period, being represented on some, as young and beautiful; on others, more advanced in years; and on a few, still further advanced in life, with apparent marks of old age: her head is invariably covered with a veil, which falls in an elegant manner over the shoulders. The *Syracusan* ladies, even at the present day, wear their veils in the same chaste style.

CHAPTER XVII.

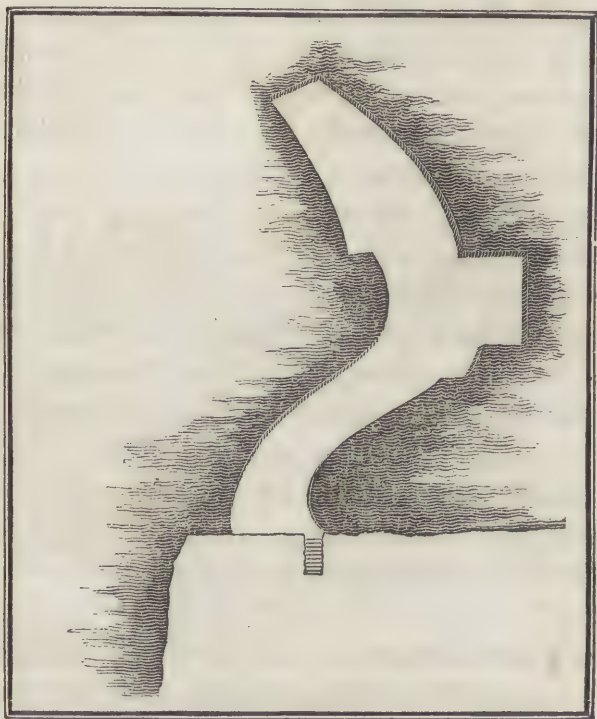
SYRACUSA.

*The Latomiæ—Ear of Dionysius—Epipolæ—
Convent of Capuchins—Catacombs—Tomb of
Archimedes—Temple of the Olympic Jove.*

NEAR the theatre is one of the *Latomix*, or quarries, excavated by the *Athenians*, who were made prisoners at the battle that occurred about the year 413 B. C. These spacious and extensive *Latomix*, of which there are several in *Syracusa*, were in all probability undertaken more for the stone, which was then absolutely necessary to carrying on the vast and magnificent buildings erecting in the city, than as a place of confinement; but in after times, they were converted into prisons. This particular one is about three quarters of a mile in circumference, and is excavated to the depth of about one hundred and twenty feet below the

level of the adjoining ground ; it is now converted into a garden, and presents a most luxuriant appearance : here we observed the deep crimson blossom of the pomegranate, and the bright yellow of the *Indian* fig, elegantly intermingled with the vine and the orange : in fact, the inhabitants of *Syracusa* call this lovely spot their paradise. Within this *Latomie* are many subterraneous grottos likewise dug out of the living rock, the principal of which, from the particular elevation of the entrance, conjointly with the name of the tyrant who originally caused its formation, is generally known by the appellation of the *Ear of Dionysius* : the peasants, however, of the neighbourhood, from its possessing a very strong echo, generally call it the *Speaking Grotto*. The peculiar form and picturesque effect of these singular caves would render them no less agreeable than curious and interesting, if we could forget the dreadful evils which formerly took place within them ; if we could forget the ponderous chains, the inhuman tortures, and the cruel tyranny of *Dionysius*, who not only behaved in the most cruel and barbarous manner to prisoners of war confined within them, but also to such of his subjects as were so unfortunate as to awaken his suspicion.

Our attention in the first place was directed to the formation of its plan, which is here introduced, in order to present a more correct idea of the form than it would be possible to convey by words.



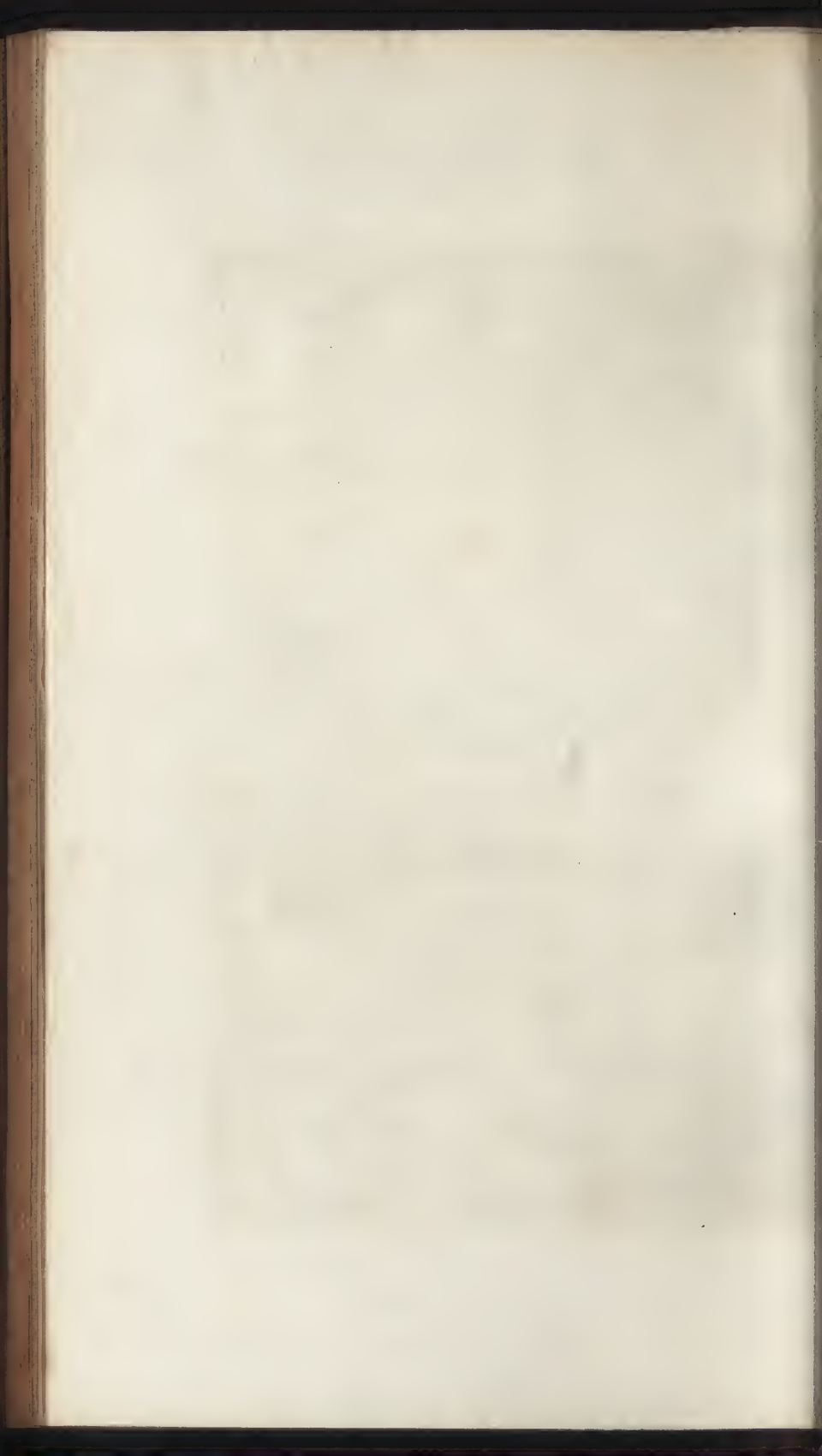
This grotto is about one hundred and seventy feet in depth, twenty to thirty-five in breadth, and sixty in height: a view shewing its pe-



J. Clark sculp.

Entrance of the Gyttis commonly called the EAR of DIONYSIUS.

London, Published by Sherwood, Neely & Sons 1819.



culiar elevation is likewise introduced: and the small aperture seen on the right of the highest point of the entrance leads to a chamber about six feet by four, in which there is an opening that looks into the interior. In the days of *Dionysius*, the existence of this chamber, and the path leading to it, were kept a most profound secret: and it is generally believed, that the tyrant used to resort to it for the purpose of listening to the conversation of the prisoners who were unfortunately confined within this horrid space.

There being no trace of the original entrance to this chamber, we were under the necessity of ascending in the manner shewn in the accompanying view. When we had thus ascended, a conversation was carried on in an under voice, in order to ascertain the truth of the echo which this grotto was stated to possess; and what was said by our companions, stationed at its further extremity, was most distinctly heard, as well as the action of tearing some writing paper; so wonderfully surprising is the echo, or reconveyance of sound in this singularly constructed vault. Whether the primary formation was the work of chance, or whether it was excavated upon

a preconcerted plan, it becomes neither the less interesting nor the less extraordinary: it presents a gloomy, and, at the same time, most imposing effect, and almost realises in the imagination an idea of the cavern of the ancient *Sibyls*. This grotto, as we have already mentioned, is extremely sonorous, and reverberates the slightest sound many times; the echo is perfectly natural, although it is multiplied and prolonged to a considerable degree; and, independently of the extreme truth with which the voice is impelled back again, the power of it is likewise considerably increased.

For the purpose of enjoying this celebrated echo in the greatest perfection, we took a brace of pistols, with which we amused ourselves within this obscure retreat; and the report occasioned by their discharge produced a confused noise, resembling that of a long continued peal of thunder. On another occasion, during the cool breeze of a delightful evening, we retired to this place, accompanied by a shepherd, who was accounted a tolerably good performer on the flute, for the purpose of hearing the effect produced by music: with this experiment we were highly gratified, inasmuch as the shep-

herd played some favourite *Sicilian* airs most delightfully, the melodious notes of which were echoed, and re-echoed, with enchanting fidelity.

The interior of another of these grottos presents the most extraordinary appearance, the ceiling, if we may so call it, being supported by pillars originally left in the natural stone, but which, having become rounded by time, now resemble enormous stalactites; while the solemn tranquillity constantly pervading this subterraneous excavation almost led us to fancy that it must have been intended for the abode of the God of Silence.

The ancient *Syracusa* was built upon a rock, which served as the immediate foundation, whereon the various public and private buildings were erected: and in many places it is easy to trace their plans from the indents made in the natural stone for the insertion of the walls. There still remain also obvious marks of the direction of the principal and transverse streets from the grooves or ruts which the wheels of the carriages had formed in the rock, and which, in many instances, are full six inches deep.

We now began to approach the exterior or boundary wall of the city, which was constructed, according to the usual practice of the *Greeks*, with stones of large dimensions, worked perfectly square, and set without the smallest particle of lead, cement, or mortar. After following the direction of this wall, which in many places remains perfect to the height of seven feet, we at last arrived before the ruins of a castle situated at the point which terminates the quarters *Tyche* and *Neapolis*, and served as the entrance to that part the most elevated, anciently named the *Epipolæ*.

It is uncertain, as has been before mentioned, whether the *Epipolæ* formed a fifth quarter of the ancient city, or whether it was the particular name bestowed upon it as a fortress: this part, however, occupied the most elevated portion of the rock on which *Syracusa* stood, and terminated at a point called *Belvedere*. There were formerly several castles situated within the *Epipolæ*, the *Euryale*, the *Labdalo*, and the *Exapilo*, which were considered almost impregnable, and were so advantageously situated, that they commanded not only the whole city, but likewise the ports. Of so much importance were these fortresses, that *Marcel-*

lus, after having made himself master of *Tyche*, hesitated whether his troops should take up their quarters within the walls, the *Epipolæ* remaining in the hands of his adversaries.

After having proceeded along the walls of the *Epipolæ* on the southern side to the extreme point *Belvedere*, where many remains of an ancient castle still exist, we returned by the north-eastern side, following the wall which *Dionysius*, with his great perseverance and personal attendance, caused to be erected within the short space of twenty days. This particular portion is about thirty *stadia*, or three miles and three quarters in length, and was constructed in the same manner as that on the opposite side, forming a solid mass of masonry near ten feet in thickness. *Dionysius* employed upwards of sixty thousand workmen in the execution of this stupendous and useful undertaking, which ever after rendered *Syracusa* impregnable: indeed, *Marcellus* would have been unable to have conquered the city had he not been assisted by treachery.

After our excursion to the *Epipolæ*, we visited another *Latomie*, still more curious than

the one previously described, situated near the convent of *Capuchins*, to which it is now attached. This *Latomia* has been converted by the monks into a most delightful garden, where the choicest vines intermingle their beautiful foliage amidst the numerous trees and shrubs growing in this romantic spot, at the bottom of an excavation more than a hundred feet below the natural level.

After quitting this delightful retreat, we were attended through the convent by the *padre rettore*, who received us with much civility: it contained nothing remarkable, except the *cimiterio*, which greatly resembled that of *Palermo*, already described in the account of that city.

We next proceeded to the catacombs, a geometrical plan of part of which is here introduced, and which are considered more extensive, and in a better state of preservation, than those at *Rome* or *Naples*. The entrance appears to have been used in times subsequent to their formation as a church: in fact, tradition mentions that it was consecrated by Saint *Marcian*, whom Saint *Peter* had ap-

Plan
of the
CATACOMBS
at
Syracuse.



- A. Entrance
- B. Sepulchral Chamber
- C. Sarcophagus
- D. Streets
- E. Catacombs



pointed bishop of the island. The episcopal seat still exists, and is decorated with two *Ionic* columns; on one side rests the tomb of Saint *Marcian*, constructed with true apostolic simplicity; and on the other a small column of granite appears, which the inhabitants in the immediate neighbourhood, even at the present day, hold in great estimation, believing that many of the saints who suffered martyrdom at *Syracusa* in the early days of christianity, had been attached to it during the period they were innocently suffering the excruciating pains of death.

We then passed into one of the principal streets of the catacombs, or in other words, subterraneous city, which is near twenty feet wide, and eight feet high, with its ceiling or upper surface sometimes flat, sometimes semi-circular, and sometimes spherical. The street continues in a straight direction, and we advanced about a mile, when an impediment presented itself, occasioned by some of the natural soil having fallen in, which rendered all further progress totally impracticable.

In our perambulation along this street, we observed innumerable tombs on both sides,

with semicircular openings excavated out of the living stone, and also several sepulchral chambers, each possessing a private entrance. In all probability these chambers were reserved for some of the principal families, perhaps those who contributed towards the execution of this extensive work ; and in most of them a niche of much superior workmanship was very perceptible, which no doubt had been originally formed for the head of such particular family.

At intervening distances we encountered transverse streets, forming at their intersections little squares, and also several circular saloons, whose ceilings were generally spherical ; around these saloons numerous tombs are symmetrically excavated with much attention to order, and in the centre of the ceilings are openings, which were in all probability made for the purpose of admitting air and light into this city of the dead.

The origin of this gloomy labyrinth, whose extent is so considerable, that our *ciceroni* were fearful of proceeding to the end of any one of the principal streets, must assuredly be attributed to the *Greeks* when they were

at their highest point of prosperity, a period long antecedent to their subjugation by *Marcellus*, for since that period the city of *Syracusa* has never contained a sufficient number of inhabitants, even if they had all been employed, to have executed a work of such extensive magnitude.

The only species of ornament existing within these catacombs are some indifferent paintings, representing palm branches, doves, and other religious emblems, as well as circles inclosing crosses, and *Greek* and *Latin* letters, which were the signs formerly used to distinguish the tombs of the christians from those of the pagans. In all probability these miserable paintings and inscriptions were executed in the early ages of christianity, when the faithful were obliged to have recourse to such subterraneous places of retreat, as well in order to celebrate their holy rites, as to shield themselves from the cruel persecutions then carried on against them.

Although the catacombs of *Syracusa* do not present so gloomy and melancholy an appearance as those of *Naples* or *Rome*, yet there is such a mysterious tranquillity reigning over

this silent city, as most distinctly announces that the intruder is within the sanctuary of repose. In fact, of all the ancient monuments existing at *Syracusa*, these are the best calculated for enabling us to judge, not only of the great population, but of the grandeur and magnificence of this once splendid city. The entrance to the catacombs lies through a convent of *Benedictines*, founded by Pope *Gregory* towards the close of the sixth century; and one of the holy fathers attached to the establishment, who accompanied us in our excursion, communicated much useful and interesting information respecting these extensive excavations.

Returning from the catacombs, we passed along an ancient street nearly four hundred feet in length, in which there still exist many tombs and sepulchral chambers: and in the interior of several we observed circular headed niches, which had evidently been made for the reception of cinerary urns. The entrance to these sepulchral chambers is ornamented with a fluted *Doric* column on each side, and terminated with an entablature and pediment: and from the plain and simple style in which they are constructed, we were naturally induced

to suppose that they were of great antiquity, probably long antecedent to the formation of the catacombs.

Among the different monuments still existing in this street, our *cicerone* pointed out one as being the supposed tomb of *Archimedes*: this supposition is somewhat strengthened by what *Cicero* mentions in the course of his orations against *Verres*, "that he discovered the mausoleum of *Archimedes* surrounded and almost inclosed with brambles and thorns in a street situated near the ancient gate *Agragiana*." Upon referring to the actual situation of this street, we find it is in a direction leading to that particular gate of the city, through which all persons either proceeding to or returning from *Agrigentum* must have been obliged to pass.

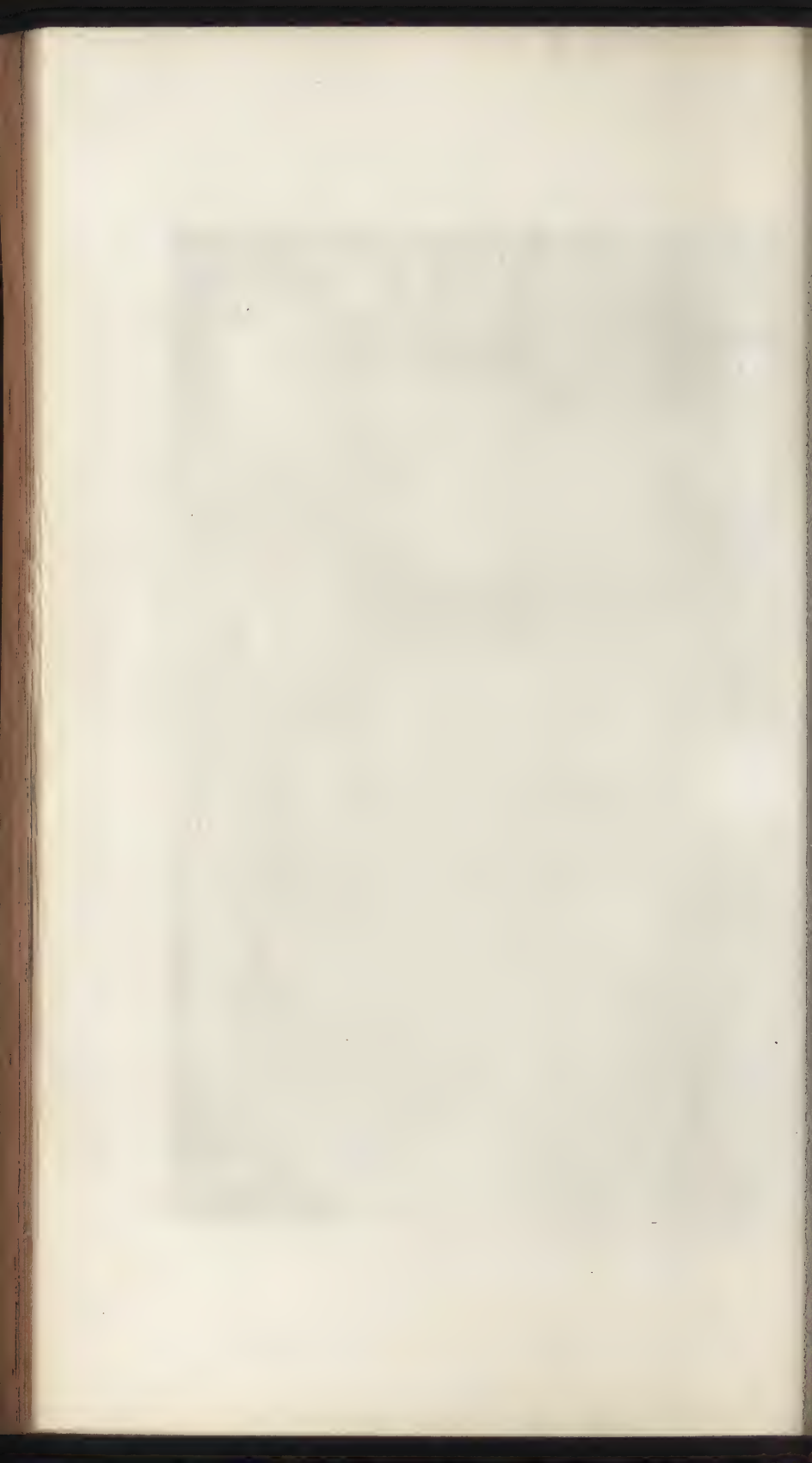
The almost total destruction of all the edifices of *Syracusa*, renders those which have escaped the more precious: and among the few which the great destroyer, Time, has left, are the ruins of the temple of the Olympic *Jove*, situated upon an eminence on the further side of the great port, about two miles beyond the city. Two columns alone remain of this ancient temple, which in former times was con-

sidered the most celebrated and most magnificent in the city. A slight sketch of *Syracusa*, as seen from this spot, is here introduced, and although not possessing all, may yet serve to convey an imperfect idea of some of its actual beauties.

All the historians of antiquity speak of this temple of *Jupiter Olympus* as being the richest monument of *Syracusa*: it contained many statues, and in particular one of pure gold of the god himself, which had been presented by the tyrant *Hiero*. It eventually happened, however, that *Dionysius*, a succeeding tyrant, conceiving a great desire to possess some of the riches of this temple for his own private use, determined to despoil this statue of its golden drapery, and substitute in lieu thereof one of wool. The *Syracusans* soon discovering the change in the appearance of their god, began to murmur and express their disapprobation at such sacrilege, upon which *Dionysius*, in order to palliate the heinousness of the crime, said, that he had been induced to make this alteration out of pure love and affection, being sensible of the great inconvenience *Jupiter* must have laboured under, from the mantle being so extremely heavy: that it was as much too warm during the



Remains of the Temple of JUPITER OLYMPIUS. the City of SYRACUSA in the distance.



summer, as from being composed of metal, it was too cold in winter. *Dionysius* then concluded, by sincerely hoping they would think the reasons which he had adduced satisfactory ; and he assured them, that these alone had influenced his conduct.

But though *Dionysius* despoiled *Jupiter* of the golden drapery, he still retained that regard for public opinion, and so much obedience to the forms and ceremonies of the then prevalent religion, as to leave the statue itself, notwithstanding its value ; and when *Marcellus*, after a three years siege, finally conquered *Syracusa*, and gave the city up to plunder, he also entertained so much respect for the worship of the gods, that he strictly prohibited the *Roman* soldiers from profaning or pillaging any one of the sacred temples. The noble and praiseworthy conduct of these great men, however, had no influence, inasmuch as the statue did not escape the after rapacity of the avaricious *Verres*, that universal robber, who, during the time he was acting under the authority of the *Roman* senate as prætor of *Sicily*, ultimately carried it off, with many others, for the purpose of enriching the gallery he was then forming in *Rome*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SYRACUSA.

*Museums of Natural History—Marine Grottos
—Papyrus Plant—Fountain of Cyane—Po-
pulation of the ancient and modern Cities—
Climate—Wines—Cafe Nobile—Women.*

IN the different museums, illustrative of natural history, which this city contains, we were highly gratified by observing some extremely fine shells of the venus, murex, and nautilus species, and which we were informed had been collected in the several grottos or caves, which the unceasing flux and reflux of the sea had formed in the contiguous shores. An idea now seized us, that by making the attempt, probably we might succeed in taking some of these curious shells: we accordingly engaged a boat, and, accompanied by our *cicerone*, proceeded to view

those shores, in the hope of finding a nautilus under full sail, clothed with all its natural beauty; and although unsuccessful in the attempt, we yet received much pleasure in examining many of these interesting marine grottos, one of which was near eighty feet deep and thirty wide.

During our abode in *Syracusa*, we engaged a small boat, and made an excursion across the great port, for the purpose of viewing the *Papyrus* plant, and likewise of visiting the celebrated fountain of *Cyane*. On approaching the mouth of the *Anapus*, so much vaunted by the poets and historians of antiquity, we were rather surprised at finding only a small stream, perfectly smooth and tranquil, about twenty-five feet wide. We now entered the river, and continued for some time ascending amidst the most delightful foliage, which covers its undulating banks, till we arrived at that point where the stream from the fountain of *Cyane* forms a junction with the limpid waters of the *Anapus*.

We learn from the mythology of the ancients, that the nymph *Cyane*, one of the favourite companions of *Proserpine*, was meta-

morphosed into a fountain for having opposed *Pluto* when he carried off this beautiful daughter of *Ceres* to the infernal regions. The ancient *Syracusans* entertained a great veneration for this sacred spring; and *Diodorus* even relates that bulls were annually sacrificed at a temple elevated to the nymph near this particular fountain.

We now bade adieu to the *Anapus*, and began to ascend the stream leading to the celebrated fountain of *Cyane*; here the *Papyrus*, which was applied by the ancients to so many useful purposes, soon presented itself: this plant is spontaneously produced in no other part of the world, except in the marshes formed by the annual overflowing of the *Nile*. The *Papyrus*, at this particular season of the year, appears splendidly arranged in all its natural beauty; almost wandering in the aqueous element, it neither attaches itself to the bottom nor the sides, and is almost wholly supported by water.

The plants of the *Papyrus* are propagated much in the same way as the other species of this particular class: from each portion, or subdivision of the root, arises a stem or

rush of a triangular form, which generally attains the height of fifteen feet above the surface of the water; each face of the triangle diminishing in proportion as it ascends, from about three inches to half an inch. The stem is formed of innumerable fibres, and covered with an envelope or skin, which, after arriving at maturity, opens at the top, and then those fibres, which have been concealed during its growth, make their escape, and form themselves into a species of green tuft or flower, frequently from twelve to fifteen inches long. At first sight the stem appears externally to possess some solidity, but on minutely examining it, we observed that the exterior face resembled the interior, although not of so pithy and spongy a nature, being likewise composed of fibres rather stronger and more closely interwoven together.

The inhabitants of the neighbourhood make no other use of this plant at the present than to bind their corn during the time of harvest, a service very different from that to which it was formerly applied. *Pliny* informs us, that independently of the paper manufactured from the *Papyrus* of *Egypt*, an invention to which, according to this celebrated author, men were in-

debted, not only for the commerce of civil life; but likewise for the knowledge or memory of past events, they also extracted from it a species of sugar, possessing a very agreeable flavour; they also made of the outside skin sails and cordage for their vessels, as well as mats, and other articles adapted for domestic use.

The information derived from ancient authors respecting the conversion of the *Papyrus* into that particular species of tissue, which was the only paper known for many ages, is in rather an imperfect state. *Pliny*, whose works are in general so interesting, especially when they relate to the different arts, has, however, failed in this instance to give a clear account of the process, no doubt supposing that the details of manufacturing such an article as the *Papyrus*, then so well known, was perfectly useless. We, however, insert the following translation of a paragraph from his writings.

“ All the papers are woven upon a table by means of the water of the *Nile*, which keeps them in a continual state of moisture; this liquid, thick and slimy, furnishes an effectual species of glue: in the first place, they form

upon a table, perfectly horizontal, a sheet the whole length of the stem of the *Papyrus* ; this sheet is then crossed by other stems placed transversely, which are afterwards inclosed within a press : the different sheets are then hung in a situation exposed to the sun, in order to be dried, and the process is afterwards finally completed by joining the sheets together, beginning with the best. There are seldom more than twenty slips or stripes produced from one stem of the plant."

The present topic furnishes an appropriate occasion for introducing the purport of several entertaining *conversazioni* that we enjoyed with the son of the celebrated *Cavaliere Saverio Landolina Nava* of this city, a gentleman who possessed considerable scientific attainments. The *signor* stated that his father, after repeated experiments, at last succeeded in manufacturing a species of paper from the *Papyrus* of *Syracusa*, and that he communicated the particulars of the process, written on the very paper so manufactured, to the principal scientific societies of *Europe*.

The method adopted by the cavaliere was nearly as follows : the plant, after being ga-

thered, was, in the first place, cut or divided into very thin slips or bands the whole length or height of the stem; a certain number of the slips were then fixed horizontally upon a board or table, and upon these other slips were then plaited transversely, which formed a kind of tissue, more or less perfect, and more or less extensive, according to the size and beauty of the plant. This tissue was in the next place fixed in a press, and afterwards, for the purpose of its final completion, exposed to the sun, in order that it might be more effectually dried.

It was therefore this tissue, this assemblage of thin and slender bands of the *Papyrus*, united or plaited together, which composed the paper of the ancients: after the different sheets were completed, several of them were joined with a species of gum or glue, and then formed into a roll, to which they applied the respective name of *volumen*, from the word *volvere*, to roll. These papers varied in size, the best or finest being about thirteen inches wide; that which they named *hieraticus*, or sacred, eleven inches; that of *sais* less; and lastly, the most common, which measured only six inches.

As *Pliny* makes no mention of the *Papyrus* of *Sicily*, it may be inferred that the whole of the paper used in ancient *Rome* was, in the first instance, prepared from the raw material in *Egypt*, and then transported to that city, where the process was ultimately completed. Hence the different kinds of paper in the course of time received *Roman* names, such as that of *Augustus*, *Livy*, and many other similar appellations.

The constant growth of this plant for so many centuries in this small rivulet, formed by the fountain of *Cyane*, may be attributed in a great measure to the fine climate of the country, and to the profound depth and almost perfect state of tranquillity enjoyed by this limpid and transparent stream. The delicate roots of this plant being thus situated, are not liable to be disturbed, either by strong currents or any thing else that could possibly tend to interrupt or derange their natural order or system of vegetation: they cover a space of little more than a mile in extent, and seem to exist only as a subject of curiosity. There is every reason to suppose that the *Papyrus* is not a production of this island, but intro-

duced from *Egypt* as far back as the days of *Ptolemy*, between whom and the *Syracusans* there existed the greatest intimacy and most perfect friendship.

After having passed along that part of the rivulet which produces the *Papyrus*, we soon arrived at the source of the fountain of *Cyane*, which is the supposed spot where *Pluto* entered the earth with the fair *Proserpine*, in his way to the infernal regions : the basin is nearly circular, about sixty feet in diameter, and forty in depth.

Although the profundity of this fountain is so considerable, yet, from the water being perfectly transparent, it is extremely easy to distinguish the smallest fish, as well as every stem, however minute, of the different aquatic plants with which the bottom and sides are abundantly clothed. The fish were formerly considered sacred, being appropriated to the service of the nymph ; and they are still numerous, being at the present time equally as well protected by the pellucidity of the water, as they were formerly by their consecration. Notwithstanding the great quantity of water which this spring produces,

its surface remains perfectly smooth and tranquil.

We now disembarked, and reposed for some time under the shadow of some fragrant shrubs, in order to shelter ourselves from the excessive heat which prevailed ; the thermometer standing at noon at 86° : and after the fatigue experienced during the last seven hours, we enjoyed some refreshment, especially some delicious *Calabrese* wine. We remained in this sequestered spot until the heat subsided, highly gratified with the interesting and beautiful scenes that presented themselves to our view, and then re-embarked, returned by the same rivulet, and ultimately reached *Syracusa* early in the evening, much gratified by our excursion.

At the period when *Syracusa* was besieged by the *Romans*, under the command of the consul *Marcellus*, about 213 years B. C., it contained a population of one million eight hundred thousand inhabitants, including the armed force, which at that time amounted to one hundred thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry. Alas ! what a change has taken place in the state of this once splendid city,

when now scarcely sixteen thousand souls can be computed within its walls.

This siege, evidently the commencement of the decline of the *Syracusan* power, continued during a period of three years, being protracted chiefly through the peculiar invention and persevering exertions of *Archimedes*, the mathematician, who was a native of this celebrated city. Towards its close, and previously to the *Roman* troops entering the city, *Marcellus* issued the most strict and positive orders to his soldiers, not only to preserve the temples sacred, but likewise to spare the life of this great man; but in the confusion, however, that subsequently took place, it happened that while attentively occupying himself in solving a geometrical problem in the dust, and not replying to some questions put by the *Roman* soldiers, he was unfortunately killed. With such ardour did this incomparable genius pursue the study of the mathematics, that his mind, even at so momentous a period, was wholly abstracted, and he appears to have forgotten the dreadful events then passing within his native city. When this sad catastrophe was communicated to *Marcellus*, he shed tears for the premature death of a man possessing such extraordinary

abilities, and immediately gave orders that his remains should be properly disposed of, accompanied with all that pomp and splendour for which the *Roman* nation at that period were so pre-eminent.

The universal devastation caused by the constant action of all-powerful Time, is nowhere more effectually seen than in traversing the ancient city of *Syracusa*: a city formerly so extensive, containing not only so many superb and magnificent public buildings, but likewise such an immense number of private dwellings, almost all of which are as it were wasted and mouldered away; and that site, whereon so many great events have taken place, is now in part converted into corn-fields.

The climate of the whole island, more especially of that part in the immediate vicinity of this city, is extremely fine; and the air, even at midnight, is so deliciously soft and tranquil, that it inspires the senses with a degree of pleasure wholly unknown to those inhabiting more northern latitudes. *Syracusa* invariably enjoys that most delightful "blue" sky for which the *Mediterranean* is so famed, and we learn even from *Cicero*, there was a popu-

lar proverbial expression, when it was intended to convey a strong affirmation, of saying "as certain as that a day never passed at *Syracusa* without the sun being visible." Upon inquiring, we were informed by several of the oldest inhabitants that this city still enjoyed the same peculiar and kind favour of Providence, of every day beholding that glorious luminary.

The different wines of *Syracusa* are, generally speaking, extremely fine, and some of them truly delicious, especially the *Calabrese*, a wine made from a grape originally from *Calabria*, of a bright red colour, and possessing a very agreeable flavour: the *Moscattello* is likewise a very superior wine, of a delicate flavour, and rich amber colour, and which is generally introduced with the dessert. During one of our interviews with the *Signor Landolina Nava*, he presented us with a bottle of wine that was very palatable, which he stated his late father, the Cavaliere, had made from the directions laid down by *Hesiod* and *Homer*. It is generally supposed that the ancients made, from these same directions, the wine used in the celebration of the sacred festivals of their gods.

In the chief cities of *Sicily* the traveller will find an agreeable establishment, where the principal inhabitants assemble, and which is called the *Cafe Nobile*. Here, when he presents himself, he will be sure to receive a courteous reception ; and if so fortunate as to understand the *Italian* language sufficiently to enter into general conversation, he will gain much valuable and interesting information, not only respecting the localities of the more immediate neighbourhood, but concerning the antiquities and other curiosities which are so abundant in this poetic country. The company frequently remain at these strictly speaking places of amusement until an hour after midnight, either playing at billiards or chess for extremely moderate sums, or else engaged in *conversazione*.

There is a custom prevalent among the gentlemen of standing uncovered during the period the *Ave Maria* is sounded, and after its conclusion of saluting the strangers present, by saying, *felice notte*, happy night : many of them promenade the city during the cool breezes of the midnight hour, serenading their favourite ladies with the melodious notes of the guitar ; while others amuse themselves by

walking round the ramparts, inhaling the refreshing air from the *Mediterranean* sea, and listening to the silent undulating motion of the mighty waters.

The women of *Syracusa* are, generally speaking, well made, and retain, even at the present day, much of that *Grecian* contour of countenance for which they were formerly so justly praised. They dress in a very becoming and truly chaste style, and still wear their veil in the same elegant manner as the celebrated Queen *Philistides* of antiquity is represented on the different medallions. Many of the young females of this city are as beautiful and lovely in person as they are lively and agreeable in conversation; they are besides extremely fascinating in their general manners, accomplished, and sound their favourite instrument the guitar in a very superior way, accompanying themselves at the same time with sweet melodious sonnets, and occasionally throwing themselves into those graceful attitudes for which they have been so considerably distinguished.

The greater part of the females of *Sicily* marry, as has been before mentioned, ex-

tremely young, that is, between fourteen and seventeen years of age, and consequently become as it were old at a very early period of life. *Theocritus*, the pastoral poet, who was a native of this city, and flourished about 280 years B. C., has very correctly described in his twenty-third *Idyllium* this apparent early decay of beauty :

“ Fragrant the rose, but soon it fades away ;
The violet sweet, but quickly will decay ;
The lily fair, a transient beauty wears,
And the white snow soon weeps away in tears :
Such is the bloom of beauty cropt by time ;
Full soon it fades, and withers in its prime.”

FAWKES'S TRANSLATION.

In a word, the peculiar softness of the climate, the delicious flavour of the wines, and the irresistible fascination of lovely woman, all united, inspire the highest pleasure and delight.

The time having now arrived for quitting this enchanting and captivating spot, we reluctantly prepared for our departure, and ultimately left this interesting city. We proceeded on our way towards the majestic and colossal *Etna*; and when we had arrived at a par-

ticular point where the muleteer said we should finally lose sight of *Syracusa*, we became as it were immoveable, and spontaneously exclaimed, Adieu, oh ! metamorphosed, yet splendid *Syracusa* !—Adieu, oh ! greatly fallen, yet magnificent *Syracusa* !—Adieu, charming *Syracusa* !—Once more, we bid thee adieu !

CHAPTER XIX.

CATANIA.

*Epitome of its History—General Description—
Cathedral—Ancient Baths—Amphitheatre,
Theatre, Odeum—Biscari Museum—Bene-
dictine Convent—Population.*

WE departed from *Syracusa* early in the morning of the 24th of May, and traversed the ancient city towards the *Scala Greca*. Passing over this celebrated spot, we observed some peasants actively employed in reaping corn, a circumstance sufficiently indicative of the genial influence of climate under which this happy country is placed. We now descended the ancient *Scala* to that plain on which *Marcellus* encamped when he undertook the siege of *Syracusa*, and continued along it until we arrived at the supposed site of the ancient *Hybla*, of which city not a vestige remains. In former

times it enjoyed considerable celebrity for its honey, as its name will recal to every poetical mind, and which, according to all accounts, rivalled both in transparency and colour the famous amber-coloured wine of *Syracusa*.

Our route now lay through a luxuriant and highly-cultivated country, composed alternately of hill and dale, nature presenting herself under the most enchanting forms, and arrayed in her gayest colours: frequently the wild vine and corn, the rose, jessamine, and ivy were seen entwined together, and if any thing could be said to diminish the feelings of calm and rural delight which we experienced while gazing on such scenes, it was beholding several vipers basking in the morning sun. Towards noon we approached a miserable *fondaco*, or public-house of the lowest class, situated at the commencement of the plains of *Catania*, where we remained in order to shelter ourselves from the scorching rays of the sun, which had now become extremely ardent; the thermometer during our stay at this wretched hovel being at seventy-eight degrees.

We quitted this *fondaco* about three o'clock, proceeding across the plains towards *Catania*,

and had not made much progress before *Etna* majestically appeared, soaring as it were above the very clouds. On approaching still nearer, the immense column of smoke perpetually rising from the apex of this grand mountain began to appear, and also the enormous fields of lava which had flowed from the crater of this terrible volcano, notwithstanding the numerous obstacles opposed to it, in a steady undeviating course down its ample sides. In traversing these plains we were twice under the necessity of fording the *Giarretta*, the *Symæthus* of antiquity, which was the most considerable river we had as yet seen in *Sicily*. We reached *Catania* about seven o'clock in the evening, and entered the same through a triumphal arch composed of alternate courses of lava and free-stone; we then took up our quarters at the *Leone d'Oro*, where we resided during our stay in this city.

Catania, situated close to the sea, is built upon the declivity of a crater, evidently as ancient as the world itself, and almost enveloped with the lava which has flowed from it: the different strata shew the great and imminent dangers to which this city has been so often exposed. Surely nothing but the abundance

and fertility of the neighbourhood could ever have endued men with sufficient courage to build and rebuild in a situation which possesses so few advantages for commerce, being as it were without ports, rivers, or fortifications, and besides always menaced with a recurrence of those terrible evils which it has so frequently experienced.

Catania is certainly not only the handsomest, but also the best built city in *Sicily*; it is well designed, most of the streets being constructed at right angles: the public places are decorated with columns and regular edifices, and the generality of the principal houses are elevated in a richly-ornamented style; in fact, *Catania* owes its present beauty and magnificence to the dreadful ravages it has so repeatedly endured from the destructive lava of the neighbouring volcano.

It is more especially from the port that *Catania* offers the grandest prospect; here a capacious quay, ornamented with the finest edifices and public buildings, the noble city with its charming environs, and in the distance the majestic *Etna*, with its alpine summit clothed in eternal snow, present the most fas-

cinating appearance, and form a *coup-d'œil* sublime and beautiful in the highest degree.

This ancient and celebrated city has no doubt passed through more revolutions than any other in the island, not only those proceeding from its vicinity to *Etna*, but still more from man, on account of the abundant fertility of the soil. *Catania* was a city previously to the time of the *Tyrians*, who were attracted by the commerce which it then carried on with the inhabitants establishing themselves in *Sicily*. This nation was in course of time dispossessed by the *Siculi*, originally from *Italy*, who were in like manner driven away by the *Chalcidenses* about 730 years B. C. *Alcibiades* then appeared before *Catania* with an *Athenian* army, requesting permission that he might enter alone and address the inhabitants, having something of moment to communicate; but no sooner was the favour granted, and the general had proceeded to the theatre, than the guards of the city quitted their posts and ran with avidity to behold that extraordinary man. The *Athenians*, foreseeing such an event, immediately disembarked, and took possession of the different strong places:

thus rendering themselves, as it were by stratagem, masters of this splendid city.

After their departure, *Arcesilaus*, general of the *Catanians*, delivered the city rather treacherously into the hands of *Dionysius*, who raised its walls, sent the inhabitants to *Syracusa*, and fresh peopled the city. Finally, *Catania* passed into the hands of the *Romans* during the first *Punic* war, and after the decline and fall of their powerful empire, it shared the same fate as the other parts of *Sicily*: it was first ravaged by the *Saracens*, and then by the *Normans*, and having at last become the portion of Count *Roger*, that prince began to reconstruct its walls; even this, however, was not sufficient to protect it from being again ravaged by *Frederic* the Second, who ultimately erected the castle that now appears surrounded by the dreadful lava of 1669, which destroyed the greater part of the city, and formed as it were a new port projecting far into the sea.

Thirty-four years after this sad catastrophe, *Catania* was visited by an earthquake, which swallowed up a great part of the city and nineteen thousand of its inhabitants, leaving no-

thing but the castle above-mentioned, the walls of the cathedral, and some of the antiquities, whose solid foundations even the earthquake could not disturb. A few years after this terrible event, the inhabitants, who from the eruption of 1669 had lived in miserable hovels, began to recover from their fright and possess some little confidence, so that about the end of the seventeenth century they rebuilt the city in its present noble style.

There are few cities more interesting, or which merit more attention than *Catania*, although unfortunately the greater proportion of its antiquities are concealed within the various strata of lava. It is much to be regretted that more taste was not displayed in its reconstruction: if, for instance, instead of the architecture of the palaces and churches being of that enriched style, it had been more chaste and simple, this city would have been accounted not only the most magnificent in *Sicily*, but even in *Europe*.

The square in which the market is held, is generally considered the best designed of any part of the city: it is entirely surrounded by splendid buildings and noble porticos constructed of

marble. Even the principal square, *Piazza del duomo*, although much more extensive, is not, in its general appearance, superior: it is however ornamented with two fragments of antiquity, which are certainly curious, and very happily grouped; they consist of an obelisk of *Egyptian* granite, elevated upon the back of an elephant composed of lava. The elephant was the ancient symbol of *Catania*.

The *chiesa madre*, or cathedral, was originally built by Count *Roger*, but reconstructed in its present form after the fatal earthquake: its front is decorated with some superb columns drawn from the ruins of the ancient theatre. They preserve in the sacristy a painting representing with great exactness the course taken by the lava of 1669, together with a general view of the city such as it then appeared, which is very justly celebrated from its being the production of an eye-witness of this dreadful scene.

Under this church are situated some ancient baths, which were not only discovered some few years since by a Prince of the house of *Biscari*, but the whole of the expenses required in making the excavations were likewise defrayed by

him: this nobleman also undertook at his own charge the excavations made at the amphitheatre. We avail ourselves of the present opportunity to remark, that this prince, from his intimate knowledge of antiquity and his judicious excavations, has certainly restored to the modern all the glory and splendour of the ancient *Catania*. Those parts of the baths, however, which he caused to be excavated, although considerable, form only a small portion of their extent: they consist of an exterior gallery, and an interior peristyle with several baths. The ceilings are covered with a species of stucco, apparently composed of particles of lava, and the baths generally are constructed of lava, finished with the same kind of stucco.

Our *cicerone* next conducted us to the ruins of the amphitheatre, which are very considerable, and offer even at the present day some idea of the grandeur of this ancient monument. It has been entirely stripped of the *mattoni*, or bricks, with which it was covered, as well as all the external ornaments, and there is nothing left but pilasters, which are constructed of lava: from these pilasters spring arches which support a gallery, and upon this a second gal-

lery is raised, bearing the uppermost seats of the amphitheatre. This once splendid edifice remained concealed under an accumulated mass of rubbish for many ages, and it was only at the period when *Catania* was rebuilt that it was discovered: it however remained for the Prince of *Biscari* to excavate, and as it were to open it to public view. The same obstacles which arrested the excavations at the baths, namely, the contiguity of various private buildings, likewise presented themselves here, and placed bounds to the active researches of this nobleman.

The ruins of the ancient theatre are not less interesting, although in a state of great decay, and there does not exist at the present time a vestige of the proscenium or of its enrichments: the columns of granite which formerly decorated it being about a century ago taken away for the purpose of ornamenting the front of the cathedral, where they still remain. These elegant columns and the various marble capitals, bases, friezes, cornices, and other fragments now lying in the court-yards of the *Biscari* Museum, sufficiently indicate the former grandeur and magnificence of this once splendid theatre.

Adjoining the theatre is an *Odeum*, a smaller building of the same class, which, agreeably to *Pausanias* and *Vitruvius*, was constructed for the performance of music: a similar edifice, situated in like manner immediately contiguous to the larger theatre, likewise exists in the ancient *Pompeia*, and is in the highest state of preservation. These buildings having no *pulpitum*, or any of the preparations necessary for scenic representation, of course strengthen the opinion of their having been originally intended for such performances.

So many public edifices of almost every description having been constructed in such a confined space, must have left little room for private dwellings; and the inference naturally deduced from this circumstance is, that ancient *Catania* was more enriched with public buildings than well peopled. It may even be added, that in this respect the modern greatly resembles the ancient city, inasmuch as the principal streets are almost wholly occupied by convents, churches, and splendid palaces.

The present will be a fit occasion for introducing some account of the immense and

superb cabinet of the Prince of *Biscari*, which forms, without contradiction, not merely an object of the greatest curiosity but also highly interesting. This prince has not only been the means of discovering and bringing to light most of the edifices of ancient *Catania*, but has likewise amassed, at a very considerable expense, a vast collection of antiquities, which, to describe slightly, would require a volume. We shall not therefore enter into a detail of this extensive museum, but simply state, that it contains numerous architectural fragments, especially of the ancient monuments of this city; a splendid series of medals and coins; specimens of antique mosaics, altars, pateras, and utensils of sacrifice. Various urns and several choice specimens of ancient sculpture also adorn this superb collection, as well as antique vases, the most precious that exist, whether with respect to elegance of form or purity of design, and which are known commonly by the appellation of *Etruscan*, although more properly designated under that of *Greco Siculo*, from their having been manufactured in *Sicily*. This prince has also united the whole natural history of *Sicily*, comprising marine plants, shells, and fish, as well as minerals, the different volcanic productions, marbles, ala-

basters, precious stones, crystals, petrifications, vegetables, and animals, the whole arranged in such systematic order, as indicates considerable science and taste. The museum likewise contains a collection of ancient armour, and many singular costumes.

The museum in the convent of *Benedictines* should not be passed over without notice, for it contains a considerable collection of antiquities, although not so scientifically arranged as those above-mentioned ; among which are numerous antique utensils for domestic purposes, of great beauty and purity, both in their ornaments and execution ; and which are considered superior to those deposited in the celebrated museum of *Portici*. The ancient vases preserved within this convent are very curious, many of them being extremely elegant in their form as well as possessing a degree of perfection in their paintings.

The interior of the convent is profusely ornamented and enriched, more especially that portion reserved for the museum : and its external appearance seems rather to announce the palace of a prince than the residence of men who have renounced the vanities of this

world. Their church is magnificent and of great extent, and contains an organ constructed by a father of the order, whose various sounds imitate different musical instruments in the most perfect manner. The organist was directed to attend for the purpose of playing some tunes upon this instrument, which he certainly executed in a very superior manner: one tune in particular, imitating an echo, was truly admirable; it almost led the imagination to fancy it was following the sound into the very distance of mountains.

After quitting the church we walked into the garden, which certainly merits inspection, from the curiosity of its having been made upon the lava of 1669, which destroyed part of the then convent of *Benedictines*. The present superb building has been erected since that period, and the whole of the members attached to it are selected from the noble families of *Sicily*: its endowments are very considerable, especially in estates.

The terrible lava just mentioned, which flowed from *Monte Rosso* in the eruption of 1669, after spreading itself over an extent of nearly fifteen miles, came at last against the

walls of *Catania*, which, for some time, resisted the impetuous shock : the mass, however, continually increasing, it finally overcame them, and then ran like a river of fire through the devoted city. Independently of destroying the greater part of the buildings, this frightful lava obliterated a source of water near the walls, the loss of which was so much the more inconvenient to the unfortunate inhabitants, because the supply was abundant, and perfectly good : in the course of time they however succeeded, though attended with considerable difficulty, in regaining this valuable spring. We descended into the excavation by steps constructed in the lava, and when at the bottom, we availed ourselves of the opportunity of examining part of the ancient wall of the city, which appeared to be constructed in the usual *Grecian* manner, without mortar or cement.

Near this spring we met with another excavation, which had been made under the direction of the same Prince of *Biscari*, where the ruins of a bath were discovered, which probably belonged to some private house in the ancient city. When we reflect upon the numerous monuments which have been brought to light

in every place where excavations have been attempted in the various strata of lava, and at different levels, we cannot for a moment doubt that *Catania* has many times suffered the same dreadful evil it experienced in the year 1669.

Although it would be extremely difficult to form even an idea of the different revolutions the ancient city has passed through, yet it may be possible to divide the various antiquities, and to assign to each age that which appears to have belonged to it: for example, the temples and the theatres may be referred to the *Greeks*, since we learn from history, that when *Alcibiades* presented himself before the city, he was admitted to an audience in the lesser theatre. The *naumachia*, the amphitheatre, the *gymnasium*, and the grand aqueduct, are most probably works of a later period, when *Sicily* had become a province of the mighty *Roman* empire; for it is well known that these particular buildings were more in use among the *Romans* than the *Greeks*, and besides, edifices built with an intermixture of *mattoni*, or brick and stone, indicate the manner of construction practised by the former of these nations.

The population of this city has increased

very considerably within the last century, inasmuch as we find that immediately after the earthquake, its inhabitants amounted to no more than sixteen thousand, but now they are augmented to seventy thousand.

During our residence at *Catania*, we passed some evenings in *conversazione* with the Baron *Recupero*, who has devoted more than half a century in making observations upon *Etna*. This nobleman has been for several years engaged in writing a history of this mountain, which is to form two quarto volumes; the first is published, and the other is expected speedily to follow. The baron as well as his brother, the professor of natural history in the university of this city, not only received us very courteously, but communicated much useful and interesting information respecting this terrific volcano; and also permitted us to see his valuable collection of coins and precious stones, which although small, contains several excellent medallions of *Philistides*, evidently representing her at different periods of life: he also possesses an extremely fine intaglio of the rape of *Proserpine* upon a sardonyx, the form of which is oval, with a conjugate diameter of three

inches: *Pluto* and *Proserpine* are here represented in a car drawn by two horses, and *Cyane*, one of her favourite nymphs, is sitting apparently in a very dejected state at the forcibly carrying away of her beloved companion. This nobleman likewise possesses two vases of some celebrity on account of their respective paintings; one of them representing a man who had incautiously entered a sacred wood, in the act of being devoured by dogs; and the other depicting the memorable combat between *Hector* and *Patroclus*.

We also visited the museum of the *Cavaliere Giannini*, containing a vast collection of the natural history of *Sicily* in all its branches. The brother of this gentleman, who is professor of mathematics in the university, very politely attended us, and explained the most interesting articles in this truly valuable cabinet: among the shells were some extremely fine specimens of the elegant nautilus.

Immediately after our arrival in this city, we visited, as a matter of course, the *Sala Nobile*, which is situated like that of *Syracusa* in the principal street, and were received in the most

polite way by the noblemen and gentlemen attending the institution. A general invitation was the result of this visit, which we of course accepted with pleasure, and passed many hours very pleasantly, and even usefully, during our stay.

The females of *Catania* are, like those of *Syracusa*, every thing that is charming, elegant, and lovely. The climate is extremely fine, and is generally considered very salubrious; while the wines, from being made of grapes produced from a lava soil, possess the most exquisite and delicious flavour.

CHAPTER XX.

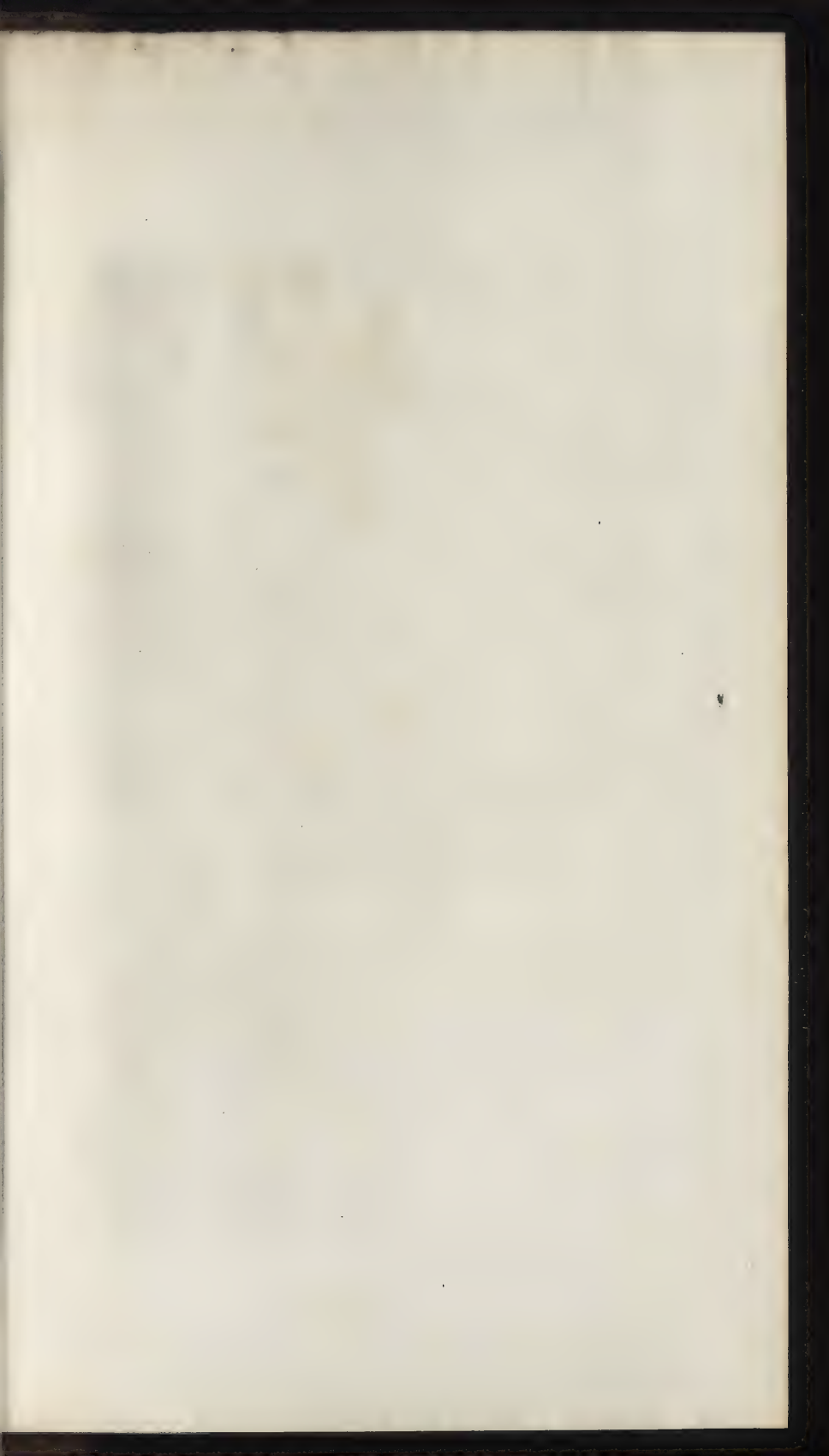
ETNA.

IN the midst of those once torrents of fire, of those fields of lava which have been accumulating from time immemorial, is found the most fertile and cultivated country upon the face of the earth. It is however true, that it requires ages of repose before such a soil produces vegetation: but the corn, vegetables, and fruit, ultimately raised upon it, are certainly of a very superior quality.

A topographical plan of this terrific volcano and its immediate vicinity is annexed, which, it is presumed, will more satisfactorily illustrate its relative situation: an explanation of the references therein inserted is given in the undermentioned note*.

- * 1. *Catania.*
- 2. *Jaci Reale.*
- 3. *Taormina.*
- 4. *Cento Cavalli.*







J. Smith del.

ETNA.

The view of *Etna* from the sea, as the fair *Aurora* makes her appearance, is peculiarly grand and magnificent, and enables the observer to form some idea of the colossal proportions of this stupendous mountain. Language, however, must unquestionably fail in describing this wonderful work of nature, which it is much easier to imagine than to give an accurate idea of, or rather the one and the other are equally impossible; in fact, it must be seen in order fully to comprehend the harmony, grandeur, and beauty encircling its cultivated base, its woody region, and its snow-clad summit. The accompanying sketch faintly delineates this superb view.

Etna is divided into three regions; the first extending from *Catania* to *Nicolosi*, the last village ascending on this side of the mountain, and which is called *Regione colta*, or the cultivated region: the second is named *Regione*

5. The crater.
6. *Grotta delle Capriole*.
7. *Bronte*.
8. *Monte Rosso*.
9. *Nicolosi*.
10. *Tre Castagne*.
11. *Lentini*.

nemoresa, or the woody region; and the third, *Regione nevosa*, or the snowy region.

We avail ourselves of the present opportunity to insert some statistical observations respecting this most extraordinary phenomenon, derived principally from the interesting *conversazione* that we frequently enjoyed with the Baron *Recupero*.

The circumference of the base of *Etna*, near 180 miles.

The height above the level of the sea, agreeably to trigonometrical observations made in the plains of *Catania* in the year 1756, 14,889 feet.

The distance traversed in ascending from *Catania* to the *cima* of the mountain, about 30 miles.

The diameter of the crater at the summit or *cima*, about 2800 feet.

The form conical, running on two sides into the sea, and on the others almost insulated.

The number of persons inhabiting the various towns and villages situated upon the declivity of the mountain, upwards of 300,000.

The extent of view from the summit embraces generally the whole of *Sicily*, *Malta*, the *Lipari* islands, *Calabria*, the gulf of *Tarentum*, and the *Adriatic* and *Mediterranean* seas, extending itself over a radius of about 165 miles.

The author of this tour having been seriously indisposed during the journey up *Etna*, in consequence of the great variations in the atmosphere, he ventures to insert a description of that arduous and difficult undertaking from the pen of one of his *Prussian* companions, which appeared in that excellent periodical publication, the *Literary Gazette*, of the 17th, 24th, and 31st *January* 1818, and therein stated by the editor to have been copied from a *German Review*.

“ We rode towards *Etna*. The day was fine, but the sun burned hotly, and our mules carried us very slowly up the mountain, on the difficult, slippery, and sandy way. We at last saw beneath us the pleasant town of *Catania*, where we had lived so happily, and the broad ex-

panse of the sea, though the edge of it seemed to rise gradually towards the horizon. Our *Catanian* landlord, and a sumpter-horse to carry the provisions, followed us.

“ These lava fields are known to be prodigiously fertile, and from their black bosom rises without interruption the richest luxuriance of the southern vegetation. Hence it is that we find on this dangerous crust of lava the most flourishing, nay the only villages in *Sicily*, and for the twelve miles from *Catania* to the last village called *Nicolosi*, pass through nothing but blooming gardens and prosperous towns ; but on the other hand this first part of the road in the cultivated region of *Etna* is rendered disagreeable from being entirely confined between the walls of vineyards. About half a mile below *Nicolosi*, the black-grey lava sand begins to cover the earth with mourning up to the summit of the volcano, a distance of about twenty miles, and presents an infinitely gloomy and almost terrifying sight. Not far from the village there lies a very deep extinguished crater, which threw out fire about three centuries ago.

“ Towards evening we arrived at *Nicolosi*, and

found a most kind and hospitable reception in the house of Don *Mario Gemmellaro*, the intendant and physician of the place. This intelligent man, equally estimable for his modesty and his knowledge, is so interesting to every traveller to *Etna*, that we hope some account of him may be acceptable.

“Whoever ascends *Etna* on the side of *Catania* must either stop at the convent of *San Nicolosi d’Arena*, near *Nicolosi*, or apply in the village itself to the hospitality of *Gemmellaro*, who has always the goodness to lend a room to travellers. We should advise every body to adopt the latter course, because the advice of this gentleman, who for these fifteen years has observed the volcano with remarkable interest and zeal, will be of the greatest service. Before the year 1804, he had built a small house near the Philosopher’s Tower (about three quarters of a league below the high crater) to protect travellers from snow, hail, and storms, when an *English* officer, Lord *F—*, having experienced the advantage of such a shelter, induced Don *Mario Gemmellaro*, by promising to open a subscription among his countrymen then resident on the island, to build a convenient house for travellers, as well as a stable for

sumpter-horses and mules. This little building, which was finished the same year, will be appreciated at its full value by every one, who, after suffering from the wind, ice, and cold, arrives at the cone of the volcano. The *English* call this little asylum "The house of the *English*;" but the inhabitants of *Etna* give it the name of "The house of *Gemmellaro*," as he was at the chief expense* and trouble in erecting it. Every traveller receives the keys gratis. *Gemmellaro*'s house at *Nicolosi* lies close to the lava eruption of the year 1787, and near the mouth of the crater of the year 1669. *Gemmellaro* and his faithful companion, *Antonio Barbagallo*, have traversed this remarkable mountain with indefatigable labour; and the former would, without doubt, be able to give a much better account of this terrific volcano than *Ferraro*, who never went up *Etna*.

"After a short repose, we set out at near ten o'clock at night, accompanied by one guide, riding on a mule, and a second on foot. We stumbled over the very fatiguing way through the woody region, *regione nemorosa*, in a dark

* The author feels great pleasure in asserting, that the whole of the expenses were defrayed by the *English* officers then stationed in *Sicily*.

night, upon our mules, without meeting any accident; thanks to our sagacious animals that we did not break our necks in these intricate narrow paths among the lava rocks. At length the moon emerged from the clouds, and her pale light displayed at an immeasurable depth below us the bright mirror of the sun.

“ We now arrived in the snowy region, *regione nevosa*, when suddenly the sky was covered with black tempestuous clouds, and the bleak air benumbed us. We could not now hope to see the sun rise, for the sake of which we had pushed so briskly forward; for this reason, and from having suffered much from the inclemency of the weather, we resolved to rest ourselves in the lava cavern, called *Grotta del Castelluccio*. After we had taken a cheerful breakfast, though with chattering teeth, we continued to wade through the immense field of volcanic ashes,—the *Grotta del Castelluccio* lying two hours below the crater. At length, the sun rising from the sea, amidst the stormy clouds, illumined the frightful wilderness, which we had not yet perfectly seen. All vegetation, except green tufts of moss, had long been passed: surrounded with clouds and smoke, we proceeded, sometimes over white

fields of snow, sometimes through a black sea of ashes, towards the summit, unable to see above fifty steps before us. In this way we had advanced about a thousand paces from *Gemmellaro's* house, when suddenly our *English* companion began to groan terribly, and fell from his mule into the arms of the guide. This unlucky event, in the gloomy solitude, and amidst the clouds of smoke, embarrassed us not a little, and of course put an end to our *Etna* journey for the present; for what were we to do with our sick companion? Our little stock of wine, which might, perhaps, have refreshed him, we had left in the cavern *Del Castelluccio*; and as the chief cause of his illness was the rarefied air, and the extraordinary change of temperature from 87° to 31° ,* it would have been folly to proceed further up to *Gemmellaro's* empty house. After he had recovered himself a little, therefore, we covered him with mantles, and carried him, as he was not able to ride on his mule, down to the *Grotta del Castelluccio*. Here he was again taken so ill, and fainted so often, that we thought him dying. However, an hour's sleep, and the warm and denser air, braced him so much that he was able to proceed with us to *Nicolosi*.

* According to *Fahrenheit*.

“ In the afternoon, about three o’clock, we arrived at *Nicolosi*, refreshed ourselves first with a good repast, drinking our *Catanian* landlord’s health, and afterwards by a sound sleep. When we awoke, about nine in the evening, the sky above us was magnificently clear. Our resolution was soon taken,—the mules were saddled,—we gave our sick companion to the care of *Don Mario*, and joyfully rode, for the second time, towards the smoking cone. The night was wonderfully beautiful : we saw the smoke rise quite perpendicularly out of the crater in the deep blue of the nocturnal sky, and therefore confidently anticipated success in our undertaking. The truly golden crescent of the moon swam in the pure ether, and illumed the sea far and wide. Our hearts palpitated with joy ; we shouted and sang, the mules climbed like goats securely over the lava rocks, and we soon arrived in the interior of the woody region. The immense lava-stratum of 1769 lay on one side of us, frightful, like a petrified ocean, whose waves still seem to rage.

“ We had not arrived at the end of the oak forest when there arose a cutting wind, which soon became a furious storm, and so benumbed us, that without the cloaks and hoods which *Gemmellaro*’s kindness had supplied, we should

have been half frozen. It now seemed impossible, from the sudden change of the temperature, to ride to the summit without having first warmed ourselves. We were, therefore, very glad when we reached, at the end of the woody region, the Goat's Cavern, by some called "The Grotto of the *English*," where poor *Brydone* was disappointed of his *Etna* journey by a severe fall, and a sprain of his foot, which obliged him to bivouack: the more we must admire his fancy, which enabled him to speak with such rapture of the prospect from the double summit of the highest crater, without having ever ascended it. A bright fire soon burned up in this dark lava cavern, which was a great comfort to our chilled limbs; for the atmosphere here was 4°* under the freezing point. In spite of all the inconvenience, this night is perhaps the most remarkable in our pilgrimage. Sometimes the moon peeped from behind the black clouds, and shewed us the sea at an immeasurable depth below us;—we beheld, full of astonishment, in dark outlines, the immense masses of clouds, which the wind furiously seized, as it were, and hurled into the sea;—sometimes the column of smoke from the crater rose far above us in the sky;—our

* According to *Fahrenheit*.

cavern was involved in the deepest shade, and before us the faithful mules stood with their heads bowed down. We lay stretched round about the fire, and here, under the shelter of the once fluid stream, we felt ourselves inexpressibly comfortable, and from the bottom of our hearts exclaimed, with the shepherd of *Theocritus*, "O! *Etna*, my mother, I inhabit in the hollow rocks a delightful grotto, and what I ever dreamed of I now possess!"

"At midnight we indeed set out, but the impenetrable blackness of the sky, and the raging storm, deprived us of all hope of a happy result, which did not a little afflict us. After three wearisome hours, during which, shaken by the penetrating cold, we had clambered in the dark over the lava beds, we again reached the *Grotta del Castelluccio*, got directly from our mules, and crept into the back part of the cavern. A good breakfast soon revived our spirits, and as we hoped that when the sun gained strength the fog would disappear, we laid ourselves down on the ground, and slept very soundly for several hours, without any fire, which cannot be made in the snowy region for want of materials. Though it was already ten o'clock A. M. and the thick fog had not dis-

persed, yet we could not resolve to return for a second time without attaining our object, or, at least, without having used every effort to effect it. The guide fearing to lose his way in the fog, was not much inclined to the journey to the cone ; but, as the wind abated a little, we persuaded him to consent. We left the sumpter horses at the cavern, and advanced straight forward on foot through the immense ocean of sand, the dense fog, and the flying clouds, but not without great difficulty. We waded up to the ancles in ashes, the clouds wetted our heavy mantles ; but the cold froze them again immediately, so that we were covered over with a white crust, like *Greenland* bears, and could scarcely bear the weight of our clothes. After a most fatiguing march of two hours, the sight of *Gemmellaro's* house was as invigorating to us as the *Kaaba* at *Mekka* to the *Turkish* pilgrim ; but unluckily the door was broken down, we supposed, by travellers who had ascended from *Bronte*, and accordingly the whole building was full of snow and ice ; so that we, who were wetted to the skin with the perspiration and fog, feared that we should freeze to death without fire in this ice cellar. Under these circumstances, it was doubtful whether we should have strength enough to

ascend the double summit, and whether the guide would be able to find his way in this rude weather ; and, even if we did succeed in ascending it, whether we should be rewarded for our trouble. As we, however, thought, like *Ulysses*, when he believed that he should never more see his native country, that we would be satisfied with only seeing the smoke rising, we determined to go still further. We therefore now proceeded over fields of snow, above which now and then appeared huge black rocks of lava, so that the whole place resembled a churchyard ; but we had scarcely advanced for about a quarter of an hour, when the wind and storm increased in the same proportion as our strength diminished, and we were obliged to resolve, however vexatious it was now to us, being so near the crater, to give up, for the second time, our intention of ascending the summit. We now turned back, and paced with angry steps over the lava fields to the *Grotta del Castelluccio*, where we had left our mules. Rude as the weather was, we could not help admiring the grand and the terrible appearance presented by the clouds and shadows which rolled in fluid masses over the black rocks. As we were so thoroughly wet through, the cold made it impossible for us to ride, and

with rapid steps we hurried through the woody region to *Nicolosi*, where the kind *Gemmellaro* received us with friendship as well as pity.

“Notwithstanding the unpleasantness of the day, we yet passed the evening very cheerfully in the company of this amiable gentleman. He communicated to us some results of his observations on the vertical and horizontal eruptions of the volcano, which he has mentioned in the little book of which we have already spoken, “On the Eruptions of the Volcano in the year 1809.” As the eruptions of lava often broke out far below the high crater, some think that issuing from the centre of this terrible basin of fire, they burst in a horizontal direction, through the body of this gigantic mountain. But, on the other hand, the direction of all these channels of lava upwards to the high crater seems to prove that every eruption proceeds from it in a vertical direction, only that it often takes a subterraneous course, and breaks out far below the high crater. When, in the year 1381, the lava broke out near *Gravina*, it proceeded from the summit by a vertical channel under ground, of which a part may be yet seen to the east of *Mascabera* and *Mas-sannunziata*. In the year 1537, it was possible

to trace exactly the vertical course of the lava in the direction of the high crater to the thirteen mouths, which opened at certain distances from one another in a descending line. The dreadful eruption of the year 1669, which broke out at *Monte Rosso*, near *Nicolosi*, proceeded from the neighbourhood of the high crater of *Monte Frumento*, likewise through a channel under ground to the *Val del Bue*, overturning from their foundation the mountains under which it passed, and thereby forming this most dismal cleft.

“ The directions of the eruption in the year 1763, and that of 1766, are likewise in a falling vertical line. One sees a similar cleft, near *Gemmellaro's* house, and the *Philosopher's* Tower down to *Monte Frumento*, through which the lava flowed in the year 1780. The vertical direction from the high crater was indicated still more plainly by the eruption which, in 1792, passed under ground from the *Philosopher's* Tower; because the earth everywhere sunk in, and so the lava marked its course by a deep cleft or furrow. Lastly, the lava flowed, in 1809, evidently from the high crater through a channel under ground, and passed through the beautiful oak forest

of *Castiglione*; for below the high crater, in the place called *Piano dell' Etna*, there were made, in a falling line to *Coriazzo*, ten openings in succession, by the force of the air, highly rarefied by the internal fire: then the lava stream proceeded under ground to a little below *Monte Rosso*, where the expansion of the air burst the surface of the earth with eighteen rents, and here, amidst so dreadful a crash that the thunder of the heaviest artillery was a trifle in comparison, a terrible torrent of lava broke out of thirteen new mouths, and flowed down towards the village of *Linguagrossa*. In *Don Mario Gemmellaro's* opinion, the great mines in which the ferrets often pursue the rabbits for miles together under ground are similar subterraneous channels of lava of ancient eruption.

“The following day, at seven in the morning, we were awakened by the bright beams of the sun; the sky was serene and blue. A perpendicular column of smoke rose from *Etna* into the air. We got ourselves ready in haste, and, to the astonishment of the good *Gemmellaro* and every body at *Nicolosi*, we were mounted in an hour, for the third time to try our fortune against the volcano, which had hitherto

been so impracticable to our wishes. Accompanied by the friendly, sensible, and bold guide, *Antonino Barbagallo*, we left *Nicolosi*, and rode without stopping past the lava beds, to the Goat's Cavern at the end of the woody region. Here, under the agreeable shade of the oaks, we took a slight breakfast; the lovely green of the forest blended with the purest azure of the heavens, and a shepherd played romantic airs on his flute, while his nimble goats grazed on a little spot in the middle of the once fluid ocean of fire; the dark blue sea mingled in the distance with the placid sky—Oh! what delight then filled our souls! The faithful mules carried us again through the intricate lava paths into the desert regions; but this time we passed without visiting the fatal *Grotta del Castelluccio* to the house of *Gemmellaro*, sometimes full of apprehension, as the clouds began again to cross one another rapidly: but yet there were moments when the sky was quite clear and serene.

“ Here, at *Gemmellaro's* house, we already enjoyed a part of the heavenly prospect which awaited us, over the sea and the whole island. The clouds floated rapidly in large masses, as if to a battle; every thing was in commotion,

and, most of all, our souls. Our excellent *Antonino* contrived to prepare for us in haste a little dinner. We soon had the snow and lava fields, at the foot of the immense ash cone, behind us, and now actually ascended it; a troublesome way, as at every step we sunk in the loose volcanic sand, losing almost as much back as we gained forwards; but joy gave us wings. Already we had passed over the beds of yellow sulphur; already the ground under us began to feel hot in places, and to smoke out of many hundred little craters; while round the summit itself the clouds sometimes collected in thick masses, and sometimes allowed us to see clearly the grand object of our wishes. At last the guide, who was some steps before us, called out, "Behold here the highest crater!" these words gave us new speed, and in a few minutes we stood at the brink of this smoking caldron, the mouth of which has vomited forth mountains, some of which are larger than *Vesuvius*, or the *Brock-en* in Germany.

"We instantly determined to descend into the crater, and though our resolute guide assured us beforehand, that it would now be impossible, as the smoke did not rise perpen-

dicularly, but filled the crater, he was willing to make a trial. We followed him a little way, but the dense, almost palpable sulphureous vapour, soon involved us in a thick night, and would have burst the strongest lungs.

“ We then went up to the southern horn, and here lay astonished on the hot sulphur, amidst smoke, vapours, and thunder. The hot ashes burned us, the sulphureous vapours stifled us, the storm threatened to hurl us into the abyss; our souls were scarcely equal to the irresistible force of the sublimest impressions. In the valleys beneath, full of black lava and white snow, and over the bright surface of the sea, which looked like a plane of polished steel, and seemed to lean obliquely to the sky, immense hosts of clouds sailed slowly along; but when they came near to the volcano, the furious hurricane, in which we could scarcely keep our feet, seized them, and precipitated them with gigantic force ten thousand feet down on the plains and seas of *Sicily* and *Italy*. We then proceeded round the edge of the crater to the northern horn; and here enjoyed a prospect, which in sublimity and overpowering grandeur doubtless exceeds any thing that the faculties of man can conceive.

The clouds of smoke rose from the crater, where the raging storm, which, like artillery or innumerable bells, drowned every other sound, rent them asunder, and with the rapidity of lightning threw them into the abyss below. The pointed cone on which we stood was covered with a yellow sulphur, white salt, and black ashes. The sun appeared very strange through the yellow sulphur, and gave to this singular picture such a terrible and savage tone, that in looking only at the objects immediately surrounding us, we could not help fancying ourselves in the horrid dominion of the prince of the infernal hosts. Every where we beheld the war of the elements, desolation, and conflagration : nowhere a living creature or even a blade of grass which these contending elements had spared. What a scene must it be, when the volcano throws the column of smoke and fire, which it perhaps raises from the bottom of the sea, twenty thousand feet towards the heavens !

“ But if we turn our eyes to the distance, it really seems as if we beheld here all the magnificence of the earth at our feet. We overlook the vast mountain, which has itself risen out of the earth, and has produced around

many hundred smaller ones, clothed in dark brown ;—the purest azure sky reposes over the land and sea ;—the triangle of *Sicily* stretches its points towards *Italy* and *Africa* ; and we saw the sea flow round Cape *Trapani*. At our feet lay the bold rocks of the *Eolian* islands, and from *Stromboli* a vast column of smoke rose above the waves. The *Neptunian* and *Heræan* mountains, covered with the thickest forests, extended before our eyes in all their branches over the whole island. To the east we saw, as on a large map, the whole of *Calabria*, the gulf of *Tarento*, and the *Faro* of *Messina*. But how is it possible to excite, in the mind of a person at a distance, even a faint conception of the innumerable brilliant colours of the sky, the earth, and the sea, which here almost dazzle the eye ?

“ After we had contemplated this astonishing scene for about two hours, we quickly descended the cone to *Gemmellaro*’s house, where we made the happiest triumphal repast that was any where celebrated at that moment,—at least at so great an elevation. *Antonino* then sent the sumpter horses down to the *Grotta del Castelluccio* by the other guide ; but we ourselves took the direction to the west, all with closed

eyes, led by our guide, to the brink of the *Val del Bue*. We have already observed that this most horrid abyss that ever our eyes beheld was caused by a subterraneous torrent of lava, which undermined all the mountains that stood above it;—hence the infernal brown-red colours of this precipice, which is many miles in length; and though we could not see any trace of vegetation, yet the diversity of tints was infinite. We rolled down large blocks of lava, but they broke into dust before they had fallen one half of the dreadful way, and we did not hear them strike in their descent. Compared with this horrid cleft of the lava, even the abyss of the *Rhine* at the *Viamala* in the *Grisons* is pleasant and agreeable. Here we look, as it were, into the heart of desolation. While we were still contemplating this extraordinary valley, *Etna* itself prepared for us a new and wonderful sight. As the sun was descending into the western sea, the gigantic shadow of the volcano projected for many miles over the blue sea towards *Italy*, and then rose, like an enormous pyramid, high in the air, on the edge of the horizon, so that the stars seemed to sparkle upon its summit.

“ So ended the richest and happiest day of

our journey, and perhaps of our lives. We then mounted our mules, which brought us in safety over the rugged fields of lava in profound darkness, about midnight, to *Nicolosi*, where the worthy *Gemmellaro* waited for us with impatience. Transported with our success, we filled him also with the greatest pleasure, and it was not possible for us to go to sleep. We spent the greater part of the night rejoicing with him and our brave *Antonino Barbagallo*."

Observations made by the Author in ascending Etna, on the 30th and 31st May, 1815.

	o'Clock.	Degrees. <i>Fahrenheit.</i>
Temperature at <i>Catania</i> - -	Noon	76
In the first, or <i>Piemontese</i> region	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ P.M.	87
At <i>Nicolosi</i> , the last village in ascending the mountain on this side, situated about 2750 feet above the level of the sea -	6	66
Commencement of the second, or the <i>Nemorosa</i> region - -	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	57
Commencement of the third, or the <i>Nevosa</i> region - -	2 A.M.	50
At the <i>Grotta del Castelluccio</i> -	4	44
Upon the snow and lava, about 1000 paces from the <i>Casa Inglese</i> - - - - -	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	33

*Observations made by the German Gentlemen in their third
Attempt on the 2d of June.*

	o'Clock.	Degrees. <i>Fahrenheit.</i>
<i>Nicolosi</i> - - - - -	8 A. M.	63
Commencement of the second re-		
gion - - - - -	9	61
At the <i>Grotta del Castelluccio</i> -	12 or Noon	56
At the <i>Casa Inglese</i> - - -	1½ P. M.	32
At the <i>cima</i> , or top of the crater -	3¼ P. M.	31 sitting.
Ditto - - - - -	—	29½ standing.
Ditto - - - - -	4 P. M.	28 standing.

We shall now bid adieu to *Etna*, first inserting the glowing description of this magnificent and colossal mountain introduced by *Virgil* in the third book of his *Æneis*.

Portus ab accessu ventorum immotus, et ingens
Ipse; sed horrificis juxta tonat *Etna* ruinis,
Interdumque atrum prorumpit ad æthera nubem,
Turbine fumantem piceo et candente favilla:
Attollitque globos flammarum, et sidera lambit:
Interdum scopulos avulsaque viscera montis
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque saxa sub auras
Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque exæstuat imo.
Fama est, Enceladi semustum fulmini corpus
Urgeri, mole hac ingentemque insuper *Etnam*
Impositam, ruptis flammam expirare caminis:
Et fessum quoties mutat latus, intremere omnem
Murmure Trinacrium, et cælum subtexere fumo.

The port, capacious and secure from wind,
Is to the foot of thund'ring *Etna* join'd:

By turns a pitchy cloud she rolls on high ;
By turns hot embers from her entrails fly,
And flakes of mounting flames that lick the sky.
Oft from her bowels massy rocks are thrown,
And, shiver'd by the force, come piecemeal down ;
Oft liquid lakes of burning sulphur flow,
Fed from the fiery springs that boil below.
Enceladus, they say, transfix'd by *Jove*,
With blasted limbs came tumbling from above ;
And, where he fell, th' avenging father drew
This flaming hill, and on his body threw.
As often as he turns his weary sides,
He shakes the solid isle, and smoke the heavens hides.

DRYDEN.

CHAPTER XXI.

Cyclopiian Isles—Jaci Reale.

UPON recovering from the indisposition that had attended our journey up *Etna*, we began seriously to think of prosecuting our tour towards *Messina* ; and after mature consideration as to whether this journey should be undertaken by land, visiting in the way the celebrated chestnut-tree called *cento cavalli*, whose foliage is said to be so extensive as to afford shelter to a hundred horsemen ; or whether by sea, touching at those parts of the coast where the different strata of lava appeared interesting : we ultimately determined upon adopting the latter, conceiving that it would present most objects worthy of observation.

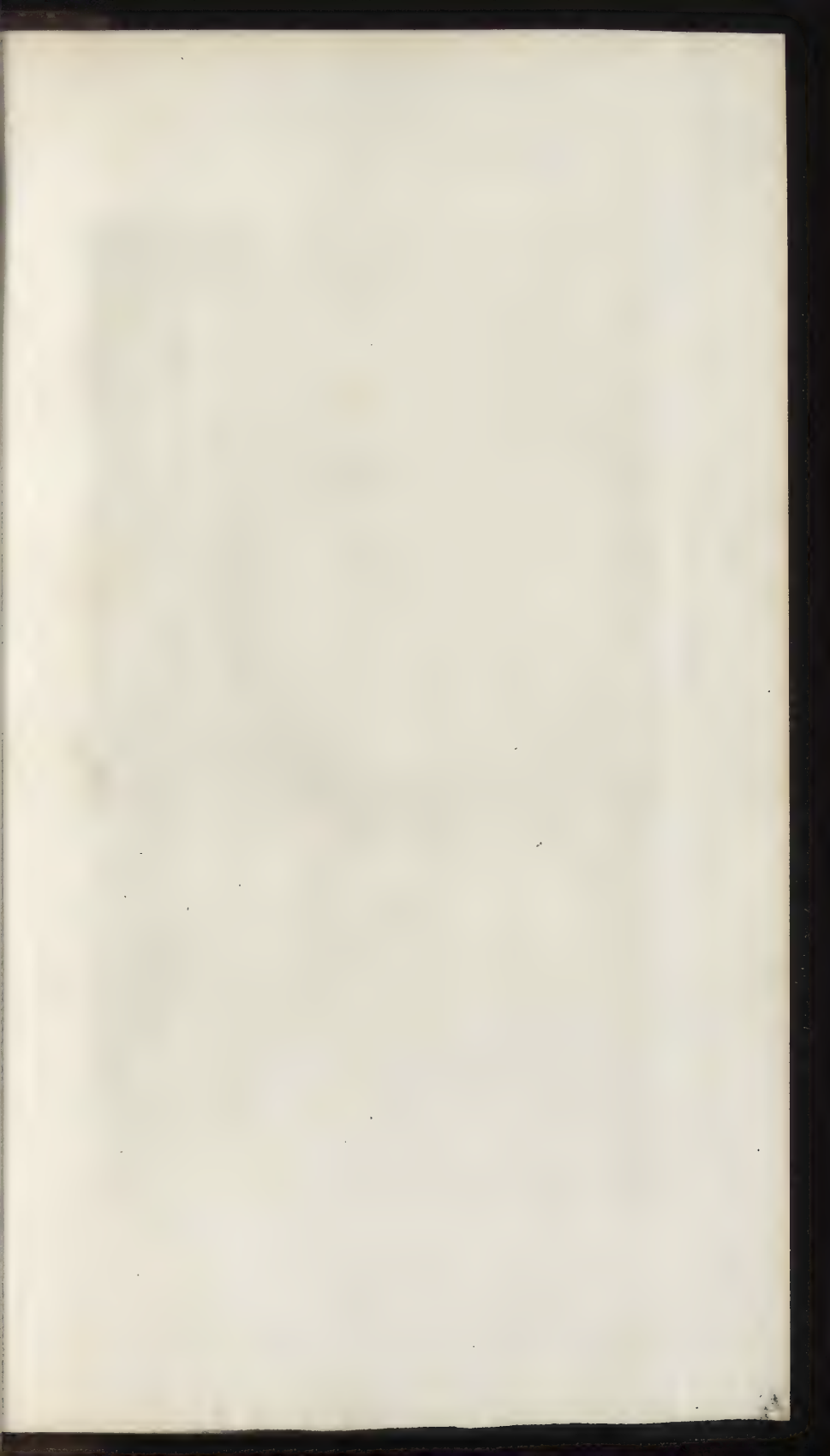
We accordingly departed from *Catania* early in the morning of the 4th of *June* in a fragile bark, and kept close in with the land till we ar-

rived at the *Castello d'Aci*. The coast, for a considerable extent in the vicinity of *Catania*, is entirely formed of lava, and, generally speaking, presents a steep and rocky aspect, exceeding, in many instances, a hundred feet in height: and as to the depth or distance the lava has flowed into the sea, it is impossible to form any opinion. In several places the masses of lava have become insulated, leaving a deep gulf between them, in which the water appears black, although it is perfectly clear and transparent. We learn from the ancient poets that *Ulysses*, returning from the *Trojan* war, was driven by stress of weather on the *Sicilian* shore; and tradition having selected this spot as the place where he effected his landing, it has consequently received the appellation of the port of *Ulysses*.

Proceeding further along the coast, our attention was arrested by the *Cyclopi*an isles, the *Scopuli Cyclopum* of *Pliny*, which are situated almost in a right line near the shore, and only a short distance from each other. In addition to these three isles, there is also a fourth, called the *Isola della Trizza*, which is about forty feet above the level of the sea, and nearly half a mile in circumference. This island is com-

posed of two distinct substances, the base or lower part, comprising about half the height, being of black lava, which is extremely hard, and the surface or upper part of a whitish kind of argillaceous matter.

The *Cyclopi*an islands are much more elevated than the *Isola della Trizza*, and are terminated rather conically : the one now referred to, namely, the second isle from the shore, is the highest, and its summit is very much pointed, so much so, that at a distance it appears to possess the form and character of a pyramid. This island is composed of basaltic columns of different heights, placed almost vertically ; it is extremely easy to disembark on the external row, which is not more than three feet above the sea, and then they progressively increase, as they approach the centre, one or two articulations in height, forming a kind of ladder or staircase. The columns in the centre are from two to three feet diameter, and in general are pentagonal, and so disposed as to form regular groups of six together. The articulations or vertebræ are about two feet six inches apart, and although marked very strong on the external face, are not wholly separated from each other, being





Black Knight

united in the centre of this apparent division. The highest of these columns are about sixty feet above, and, from the observations made on the spot, are full as much below, the level of the sea. Those of the centre have on their summit a layer or bed of clay, of the same nature as that which forms the surface of the island of *Trizza*, and the basalt is of a dark-brown colour, very hard, and containing many particles of zeolite.

The third isle is less in height, and its summit exhibits a less pointed appearance. It is, however, equally formed of basaltic columns, whose substance is of a darker colour and finer quality, with rather less zeolite than the basalt of the former island. The remaining isle is still less than the preceding, and is likewise composed of similar columns of smaller diameter, which seem thrown or heaped together as if diverging from one point, and presenting externally their strongest side, while they diminish as they approach towards their common centre. The summits of these two rocks are also covered with the same argillaceous substance. A slight sketch of this beautiful scene is offered in the accompanying plate.

Besides the *Cyclopi*an isles, there are several small groups of basaltic columns, not only in the sea, but likewise on the shore; their general form is pyramidical, and the columns vary in respect to the number of angles, from three to eight. In some the colour is a deep black, in others rather more of a brown, but all of them are more or less impregnated with zeolite.

From the *Cyclopi*an isles our *speronara* made sail and proceeded to *Jaci*, a town situated close upon the shore, whose origin is traced to a remote period of the fabulous age, and is supposed to have derived its name from *Acis*, the lover of *Galatea*, whom the cyclops, *Polyphemus*, in a fit of rage and phrensy, crushed to atoms with a huge rock of lava, while he was amorously reclining upon the bosom of his beautiful nymph.

The present town of *Jaci* occupies a much higher situation than the ancient one, occasioned, no doubt, by the accumulation of lava which has flowed at various epochs from the terrific crater of the all-powerful and all-destructive *Etna*: the different strata are very perceptible, especially in a flight of steps excavated in the neighbouring cliffs.

CHAPTER XXII.

Taormina, the ancient Taurominium.

WE now quitted *Jaci Reale*, re-embarked on board our *speronara*, and after a most delightful sail, arrived in the cool of the evening at the port of *Taormina*, where we landed, and then ascended by torch-light the steep and craggy mountain, upon whose summit the town is situated. This little journey being accomplished, we proceeded to the convent of *Dominicans*, where we were courteously received by the *padre rettore*, as well as found tolerably good accommodation.

We arose on the following morning before fair *Aurora* and her attendant train appeared, and immediately repaired to the theatre of the ancient *Taurominium*, which, from its fine state of preservation, and its admirable position, forms a ruin highly interesting. It even seems

as if nature had fashioned the site for the express purpose of receiving such a structure. The *Greeks*, aware of the advantages that this particular situation possessed for such a building, seized it with avidity, and there erected this superb monument, which required nothing more than forming the seats out of the natural rock, and then erecting the exterior and interior portico or gallery which surrounded this edifice. Although the opening of the *proscenium* of this theatre exceeds one hundred feet in width, it is nevertheless so admirably constructed, that the least sound is distinctly heard, even in the most distant part; a fact fully ascertained by our *cicerone* placing himself immediately before the *proscenium* and reciting some sonnets, which were perfectly audible, although we were stationed on the furthest seat of the theatre.

Having perused the account of *Taormina*, by *D'Orville*, and coinciding generally in his remarks, we cannot do better than insert a translation of such parts as relate to this ancient edifice:

“The theatre of *Taormina* is constructed upon an eminence which overlooks the sea, and is at the present day almost entire, or at least

preserves its ancient form. The various seats assigned for the reception of the spectators, as well as the staircases, were excavated out of the living rock, while the rest of the edifice was constructed of brick.

“ Although we were unable to discover of what materials the columns were constructed, those parts being removed, yet, in all probability, they were of marble, as there still exist the remains of several quarries in the neighbouring mountains.

“ The summit of the mountain is nearly of the same shape as the portico which surrounds the theatre, and forms a most delightful promenade around its confines. It is such a site as *Vitruvius* recommends for a theatre, being elevated, as well as extremely sonorous: ‘ ut in eo vox quam clarissime vagari possit:’ and from its interior the spectators enjoyed a most animated view, not only of the sea, but also of the receding mountain scenery.

“ The spectators ascended the rock to the level of the portico by means of staircases, and then entered the theatre and took their seats. In the interior face of the wall which surrounds

the audience part of the theatre are niches, which it is supposed were originally destined to receive statues, a custom very prevalent among the ancients.

“The interior of the theatre, that is, the part reserved for the representation of the spectacle, it is well known, was composed of a space having the form of rather more than a semicircle, which was in all the theatres of antiquity divided into the *orchestra*, the *pulpitum*, and the *proscenium*.

“The *pulpitum* was ordinarily formed of wood supported by masonry; and in this theatre the foundation of the masonry is still apparent. The *proscenium* was decorated with three public doors or entrances: it however appears from many examples, that the ancients had no fixed or determinate rule respecting them, sometimes introducing only one, and sometimes five. *Vitruvius*, however, speaks but of three, and these he denominated *aula regia*, and *aulæ hospitalia*.”

This edifice being considered the most perfect *Grecian* theatre now existing, we consequently devoted much attention both to its form



and construction. We also compared the plan given by *D'Orville* with the ruins themselves, making such alterations as the excavations carried on since the period he visited *Taormina* suggested. The accompanying plan, thus amended, is introduced, in order more effectually to elucidate our account of this superb monument of antiquity*.

The different views enjoyed from the theatre of *Taormina* are as magnificent and beautiful

* *Explanation of the References inserted upon the Plan.*

- A. Portico surrounding the theatre.
- B. Interior gallery.
- C. Amphitheatre, or seats for the spectators.
- D. *Podium*, reserved for distinguished personages.
- E. *Orchestra*, part appropriated for buffoons and dancers.
- F. *Pulpitum*, from whence the different actors recited.
- G. *Proscenium*, or front of the stage.
- H. *Aula Regia*, or royal entrance.
- I. *Aulæ Hospitalia*, or entrances for strangers.
- K. Doors, through which the actors retired from the *Pulpitum*.
- L. *Postscenium*.
- M. External wall of the theatre.
- N. Wall supporting a terrace.
- O. Steps by which the summit surrounding the theatre is attained, as well for the purpose of entering it, as enjoying the delightful prospect.

as they are boundless and various. On one side appears the town, sheltered on the north by extremely high mountains ; further onwards the rich and luxuriant country covering the immense base of *Etna*, then the almost inaccessible woods, encircling the middle region of this magnificent mountain, and ultimately the vapoury summit of this terrific volcano, clothed with eternal snow, majestically appear. Looking in another direction rather more towards the south, *Jaci Reale*, the *Cyclopi*an isles, *Catania* with her black lava shores, *Augusta*, and lastly, *Syracusa*, almost lost in the distance, present themselves. Such are the charming scenes enjoyed from the seats of this ancient theatre.

The prospect from the summit on the exterior of the eastern side is neither less extensive nor less magnificent. A most superb view of the immense mountain scenery of *Sicily*, extending to the very extremity of the island, first presents itself, together with the celebrated *Faro* of *Messina* ; then appear *Reggio*, the adjacent coast of *Calabria*, and the gulf of *Tarento* ; and lastly, the boundless expanse of the *Mediterranean* sea finishes this splendid and enchanting prospect.

After having devoted many hours in examining these venerable ruins, we next turned our attention towards the other antiquities still existing in this place, and which consist principally of the remains of an aqueduct and several reservoirs, one of which is in a perfect state, and resembles in its construction and form a similar building at *Baia* near *Naples*, called *la Piscina Mirabile*. Although it is very doubtful whether these reservoirs were introduced by the *Greeks* or *Romans*, yet this appears certain, that the one at *Naples* is of *Roman*, while those of *Taormina* are of *Grecian* workmanship.

The churches of *Taormina* possess nothing remarkable, if we except the different species of marbles with which they are profusely decorated: and in the convent of *Dominicans*, where we resided, is a large court surrounded with columns of a brown marble interspersed with streaks of white. The simple architecture of this cloister, and of the convent generally, forms a singular contrast with the almost savage wildness of the majestic mountains, which seem as it were every moment to threaten impending ruin.

We observed in the environs of *Taormina*

several ancient tombs, square upon the plan: they are generally elevated upon a foundation of three or four steps, and finished with stucco; and are likewise decorated with pilasters at the angles. The ornaments of these tombs partaking much of the *Roman* style, it is therefore very probable they are of an age posterior to *Cæsar*, who chased away the original inhabitants of this city, and established a *Roman* colony in their place. A view of the magnificent mountain scenery of *Taormina*, as it appears from the north-eastern side of the rock, whereon stand the remains of the theatre, is here annexed, in order more fully to illustrate our remarks upon this truly romantic situation.

The origin of the ancient *Taurominium* is unknown. We find it mentioned, however, in history, as being conquered by *Dionysius* in the ninety-fourth Olympiad, or about 403 B. C.

Previously to leaving *Taormina*, we once more visited that most splendid and superb monument of antiquity, the theatre, and after bidding its delightful site adieu, we descended the steep and rugged mountain, and embarked on board our *speronara*. The wind being now very favourable, and the weather extremely fine,



J. Clark sculp.

View in the Environs of TAORMINA.



no time was lost in hoisting the sails and proceeding to sea : our boat keeping close in with the shore, enabled us to enjoy a succession of the most delightful prospects, especially of the environs of *Capo San Alesso* and *Capo della Scalletta*. We now began to enter the celebrated *Faro*, and beheld *Reggio* and the mountains of *Calabria* rising majestically before us : but in consequence of the wind and current being adverse, the sea became rather rough, indeed so much so, that our *capitano* ordered the crew to lie down. The breeze, however, still freshening, our *speronara* was carried along, notwithstanding the opposition it encountered from the increased agitation and turbulence of the waves, at the rate of seven knots or miles per hour. We soon passed the frightful *Charybdis*, so much dreaded by the ancients, and after doubling the extreme point of land, entered the capacious harbour of *Messina*, and ultimately landed at the *Casa di Sanita*, or office of health, situated upon the charming *Marina*, which borders this delightful bay, with spirits not a little elated at having performed a voyage, considered by *Sicilian* mariners as extremely dangerous, especially when made in an open boat, and under the like circumstances of wind and current in opposite directions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MESSINA.

*Cathedral—Piazza di San Giovanni di Malta
—Palace of the Viceroy—Citadel—General
Observations.*

MESSINA is unlike many other cities in *Sicily*, which present only an external appearance of grandeur: in fact, it possesses almost every quality which can entitle it to rank among the first in *Europe*. Wide and capacious streets and squares; grand and magnificent churches and public buildings; bronze and marble statues, and fountains, form the principal features of this delightfully situated city.

The principal church or cathedral was erected by Count *Roger* in the eleventh century, and is considered a good specimen of the then *Gothic* style; the interior is profusely en-

riched and decorated, and contains some extremely fine antique columns of granite : it was dedicated to the Holy Virgin, under the title of *La Madonna della Lettera*. The following most extraordinary event gave rise to this singular title, the subject of which is represented in *basso-relievo*, worked in gold and silver on the front of the great altar : with respect to this circumstance, tradition informs us, that in the first years of the Christian era, Saint *Paul* visited *Taurominium*, and there preached his doctrines : his reputation, however, soon reaching *Messina*, many of the inhabitants who went to hear him immediately became proselytes to the truth of that religion which the holy apostle so eloquently taught. The number of faithful increasing, the *Messinians* determined upon sending deputies to the Holy Virgin to solicit the honour of her benign protection ; to which, as tradition further relates, the mother of our blessed Saviour graciously replied by letter, wherein she assured them of her favour, and also promised to intercede for them with her beloved Son : the Holy Virgin deigned even to send some locks of her hair by the hands of the deputies, who also brought with them her portrait. We were gravely informed, that the letter is still preserved in the tabernacle of the

cathedral, and that the hair of the Holy Virgin is likewise inclosed within a vase of crystal: the portrait also exists, and is conspicuously placed in front of the principal altar. These reliques are duly exhibited during the solemnization of certain religious *fêtes*, and especially during the continuance of any public calamity.

It is the practice in *Sicily* to decorate in the most profuse and gaudy manner the principal altars of their churches. Such is the style in which the altar of this cathedral is ornamented, and although displaying no taste, yet it merits notice from the richness of the materials. A very considerable portion is composed of *lapis lazuli*, and mosaic work in *pietre dure*: the stones of which this latter species of work is composed are of the greatest rarity and value.

The piazza or square in front of the cathedral is ornamented with a handsome fountain, and an equestrian statue of *Charles the Second of Spain*.

The various convents and religious houses in this city are of a superior class, and the churches generally are copiously enriched; the

walls and pilasters being covered with such a variety of marbles, that at first view they are generally mistaken for silk of different colours.

Among the different public places at *Messina*, there is none more frequented than that of *San Giovanni di Malta*, and it is in this square that they celebrate the *fête* of the holy letter. This grand ceremony opens by a display of fireworks from a rich galley, which is constructed on the basin of the fountain situated in the centre of the square. This galley is introduced to remind the people of *Messina* of an extraordinary favour formerly shewn by the blessed Virgin, their protectress. Tradition relates, that many centuries since, at the period of this sacred festival, a scarcity of corn having arisen in consequence of the great concourse of strangers who were attracted to the city, the religious devotees then assembled had recourse to public prayers, and on the morning of the grand day they beheld the welcome sight of three vessels laden with corn entering the harbour. The corn was immediately purchased, and deposited in the magazines, after which the people went to the port for the purpose of satisfying the masters, but neither they nor their ships could be found!

When this circumstance was known, no person doubted that the corn was a present from heaven, and, in order to acknowledge this pledge of divine favour, the senate ordered three ships to be made of silver, which were presented as a votive offering to the Holy Virgin; while the clergy of *Messina* imposed an annual tax upon the different members of their own body to pay the expenses of constructing this galley, which, as we were informed, is richly decorated, armed with three guns, and furnished with masts, sails, and rigging. The *fête* continues five days, during the evenings of which the galley is splendidly illuminated, and the whole is terminated by another grand display of fireworks.

The palace, formerly occupied by the viceroy of *Sicily* when they resided in this city, is erected in a style at once noble and magnificent; it is situated next to the delightful bay, and commands an extensive view, not only of the harbour with its forest of masts, but also of the citadel, which was constructed by the Emperor *Charles* the Fifth, of *Sicily* from *Capo di Faro* almost to *Syracusa*, and of the celebrated strait of *Messina*, *Reggio*, and the *Calabrian* coast. The accompanying view, taken





Engraving

MESSINA and the Entrance to the FARO, with REGGIO and the Coast of CALABRIA.

from an elevated station, will shew in a slight manner the situation of *Messina*, together with the *Faro*, *Reggio*, and the coast of *Calabria*.

In the front of this building, placed on an elevated pedestal, is a statue of Don *John* of *Austria*, natural son of *Charles* the Fifth, which was erected by a decree of the senate of *Messina*, in memory of the naval victory which this prince obtained over the *Turks* at *Lepanto*, in the year 1571.

We found in *Messina* other public places equally embellished with sumptuous palaces and buildings, and we may say that the city is not only well built, but also well peopled, inasmuch as it contains nearly eighty thousand inhabitants.

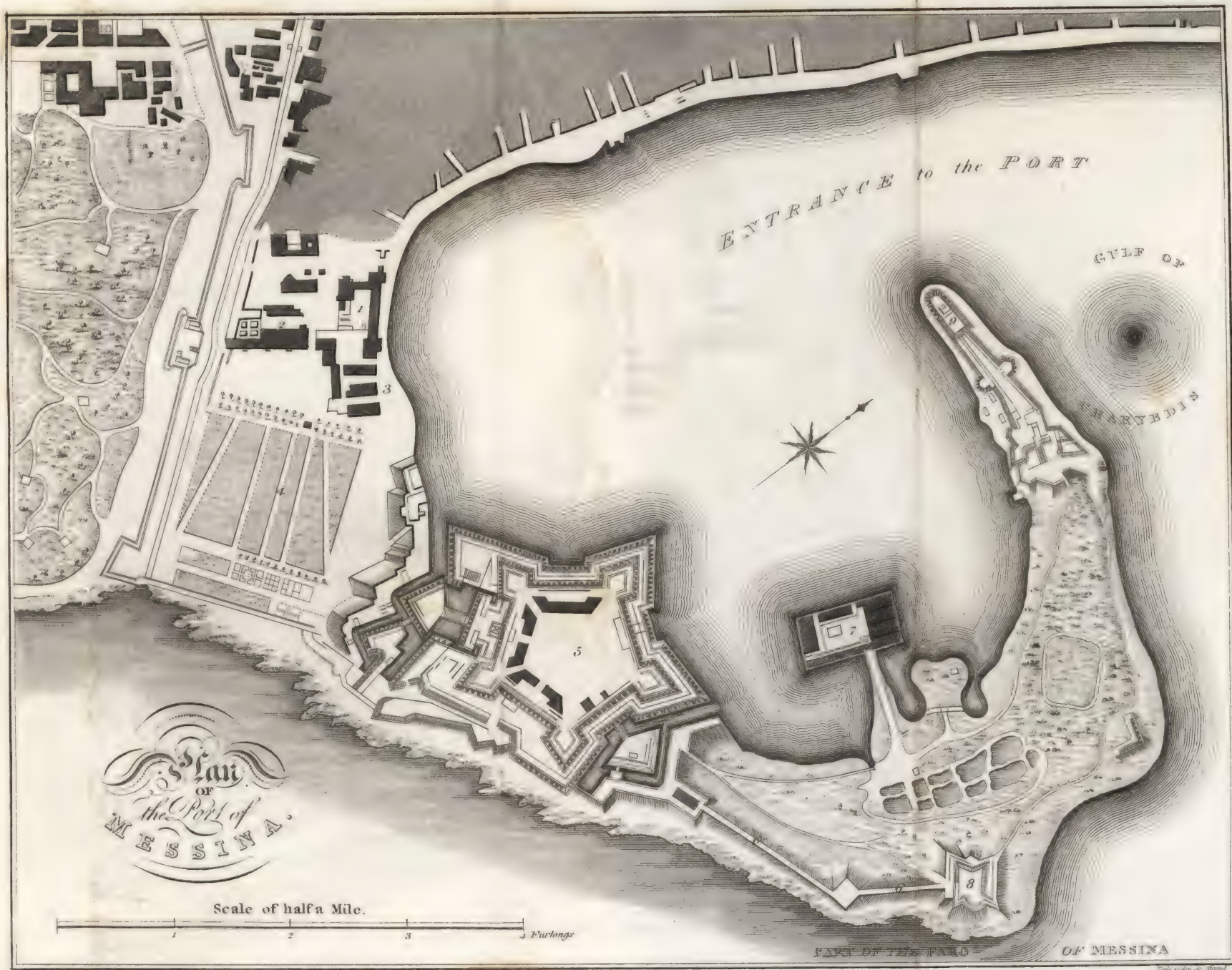
Near the palace of the viceroy is a charming promenade, shaded by luxuriant foliage, under which the *Messinians* can walk at all hours, without being exposed to the scorching rays of the sun. This covered path leads to the superb citadel, which is not only a regularly constructed fortress, but is likewise very strong, and from its peculiar situation commands equally the city and the port. The tongue of land on

which it is built is one of the happiest works of nature, for it may be said that the most able engineer could not have devised a plan more appropriate for rendering the harbour secure. The citadel itself is almost entirely surrounded by the sea, and is well defended, especially next the *Faro*: it would be capable of a long defence, inasmuch as it is not commanded by any place on the land side.

The port of *Messina*, a plan of which is annexed *, is likewise defended by two other fortresses, that of the *Lantrne*, situated in front of *Reggio*, and that of *San Salvador*, placed at the extremity of the tongue of land; but its principal defence, and that which would effectually prevent it from being bombarded, is the difficulty of anchorage throughout the

* *References to the Plan of the Port of Messina.*

1. Palace of the viceroy.
2. Barracks.
3. *Porto Franco*.
4. Public promenade.
5. Citadel.
6. Covered way.
7. *Lazzaretto*.
8. Lighthouse and fort.
9. Fort *San Salvador*.





greater part of the strait. It seems as if nature, aided by the invulnerable *Charybdis*, guarded the security of this harbour, which is assuredly the finest and most extensive in the *Mediterranean*; and is between six and seven miles in circumference.

There are considerable ruins of many buildings yet existing in various parts of *Messina*, the wrecks of that dreadful convulsion of nature, the earthquake, which almost destroyed this city and its vicinity, on the 5th of February, 1783. The melancholy appearance of these ruins produced in our minds sentiments of profound veneration for the secret decrees of an all-wise Providence, similar in every respect to those which we were impressed with when viewing the awful remains of a like dreadful event in the city of *Lisbon*.

With respect to ancient monuments, there is scarcely a city in *Sicily* that possesses fewer, and we may almost regret with *Cicero*, the great loss it sustained through the removal of some fine *Grecian* statues by the avaricious *Verres*. The orator particularly alludes to those contained in the palace of a certain *Caius Heius*, which was regarded as the chief orna-

ment of the city : this *Heius* had assembled in a small temple many statues and altars that he held from his ancestors, of the whole of which *Verres* forcibly possessed himself. These statues were the productions of the most celebrated sculptors of antiquity, and comprised a *Cupid* in marble, from the masterly hands of *Praxiteles* ; a *Hercules* in bronze, finely cast, the work of the famous *Myron* ; and two elegantly formed bronze figures of exquisite beauty by *Polycletus*, representing young virgins bearing votive offerings on their heads.

Before leaving *Sicily*, we shall offer a few general remarks on men and manners, as they presented themselves to our observation. In the first place, the religion of the country, which is catholic, occupies too considerable a station, and embraces by far too much of the public wealth : it also greatly encourages indolence, inasmuch as in some places nearly one fifteenth of the population is attached to its service, which is, most undoubtedly, the cause of so much of the land remaining uncultivated. The remarks introduced in different parts of this work, as to their religious *fêtes* and processions, will suffice to shew the degree of bigotry and superstition which still prevails ;

and while the clergy, as is now the case, possess almost supreme authority over their temporal as well as their spiritual affairs, there can be no hope of improvement.

As to the population of the island generally, it is certainly upon the decline: this arises principally from so many persons belonging to the church being constrained to lead a life of celibacy. According to a census made a few years since, the number of individuals amounted to little more than one million seven hundred thousand: what a sad falling off does this circumstance present from that period, when, according to ancient records, the city of *Syracusa* alone contained no less than one million eight hundred thousand inhabitants! We have before observed on the extremely low state of their productions in mechanics and manufactures; and as to the fine arts, the *Sicilians*, with very few exceptions, appear to possess but little taste for their cultivation.

We cannot, however, suffer this opportunity to pass without noticing the great civility and attention which we invariably received from the members of the different religious orders, whether while visiting them, or residing in

their convents; especially at *Alcamo*, *Girgenti*, *Noto*, and *Taormina*.

Much has been said by different writers on *Sicily*, of the necessity for travellers engaging an escort or guard to protect them from the numerous banditti which infest the interior: we are happy, however, in being able to state that, during our tour through the island we did not find it necessary to have any other person in our company than the muleteer or guide. The country in this particular instance therefore appears to have become more civilised than it was thirty years ago.

The peasantry of *Sicily* are a hardy race, and might become valuable subjects under a better regulated government: in general they are sober, industrious, and honest, and are extremely partial to the *English* nation. Many of the nobility take a pride in imitating our manners, and hypothetically say, that if they could but succeed in establishing a constitution on broad and liberal principles like the *Magna Charta* of *England*, they should then be truly happy.

The climate of the whole island is soft and

temperate, especially in the immediate vicinity of *Messina*, which is at once sheltered from the cold bleak winds of winter by the surrounding mountains, and refreshed during the sultry heats of summer by the breezes of the neighbouring *Faro*. In fact, this city and its beautiful environs are in general allowed to be an advantageous situation for those persons who are recommended to reside in a warm climate for the recovery of that inestimable blessing, health.

CHAPTER XXIV.

*Faro of Messina—Melazzo—The Æolian or
Lipari Isles—Bay of Naples.*

A *SICILIAN* brig, at this time in the harbour, being on the eve of sailing with passengers for *Naples*, whither it was our intention also to proceed, we lost no time in seeing the *capitano*, and engaging a passage: and as this vessel was not to proceed to sea until the subsequent day, we hired a boat, and once more visited the terrible *Charybdis*, which, as *Homer* says, “three times every day absorbs the bitter wave, and three times casts it back again with a fearful noise.” Although the sea was now extremely tranquil, yet the continual oscillation of the waters within its vortex was very apparent; in fact, this tremendous gulf is in a state of incessant agitation.

We read in ancient authors of *Scylla* and *Charybdis* swallowing all vessels that came

within their vortex, and *Virgil* especially has finely described the navigation of this celebrated *Faro*, particularly in depicting the situation of the vessel when passing over these horrible gulfs.

“Tollimur in cœlum curvato gurgite: et iidem
Subducta ad manes imos descendimus unda.
Ter scopuli clamorem inter cava saxa dedere;
Ter spumam elisam, et rorantia vidimus astra.”

“To heaven, aloft, on ridgy waves we ride,
Then down to hell descend, when they divide:
And thrice our galleys knock'd the stony ground,
And thrice the hollow rocks return'd the sound,
And thrice we saw the stars that stood with dews around.”

DRYDEN.

Notwithstanding the manifest danger of diving in the vicinity of these gulfs, yet we understood at *Messina*, that there had been men courageous, or rather, presumptuous enough to approach them: the inhabitants still speak of a famous diver named *Colas*, who passed the half of his life in the water, and swam with such facility, that he obtained the surname of the *pesce*, or fish. His reputation, however, was ultimately purchased at the expense of his life; for King *Frederic* wishing to witness his exploits, threw a golden cup into

the *Charybdis* : *Colas* immediately precipitated himself twice into the tremendous vortex, and twice succeeded in rising with the cup ; but the king again throwing it into the part the most agitated, the poor *pesce* was overcome, and reappeared no more : no doubt he was carried away by the irresistible force of the currents, his body being found some days after about thirty miles distant. We cannot help thinking his majesty might have found a better and a more dignified amusement, than urging a needy wretch to desperate enterprises, which were but too likely to have a fatal termination.

We embarked on board the brig on *Tuesday* the 13th of *June*, and very reluctantly bade adieu to *Messina*. We steered our course towards the *Calabrian* coast, and passed near the terrific *Scylla*, so terrible to the mariners of antiquity. After doubling *Capo di Faro*, the vessel kept close in with the *Sicilian* shore, and arrived at *Melazzo* before sun-set : this little voyage was delightfully pleasant. The object of our touching at this place was for the purpose of increasing our passengers, although we were already so numerous, as to render our reposing at the same time, even in the hold, wholly impracticable.

We remained at *Melazzo* till the *Thursday* morning, during which time we visited the castle and fortifications, which are erected upon a rock of considerable elevation: this place is strong, not only by its natural position, but also by the assistance which art has rendered; and from its peculiar situation, it certainly may be considered the *Gibraltar of Sicily*.

There is a tunny fishery established at this place, and although they took none while our vessel remained here, we however enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing a sword fish made prisoner: this fish was exceedingly voracious, and would have forced a hole through the side of the boat, had not the men immediately deprived it of life; it was about five feet six inches in length, exclusive of the sword, which is formed by an elongation of the upper jaw projecting full two feet and a half. We partook of this fish several times during our stay at *Messina*, stewed in a very particular manner, and it most undoubtedly possessed a fine flavour, and was otherwise extremely good.

After taking in the additional passengers, chiefly females following their husbands, who were officers in the royal *Sicilian* guards, to

Naples, we weighed anchor, doubled the promontory, and stood out to sea. As the *Sicilian* shore receded further and further from our view, till we finally lost sight of it, our hearts felt considerable despondency ; inasmuch as we were quitting a country where the inhabitants generally were honest, respectful, and attentive, and where we had experienced the greatest civility and politeness from the superior ranks of society ; a country not only exceedingly abundant in antiquities, but possessing also so many extraordinary phenomena of nature ; a country rich in luxuriant, rural, and romantic views, and above all, extremely fertile ; in fact, a country, excepting in constitution and government, combining every thing agreeable, charming, and beautiful.

The passage from *Sicily* to the isles of *Lipari*, departing from *Melazzo*, occupies only a few hours when the wind is favourable, as the distance does not exceed thirty miles. These isles, from the various phenomena which they present, unquestionably deserve the attention not only of the curious traveller, but of the scientific naturalist. We meet in this archipelago of fire, in these islands evidently the production of this raging element, with nu-

merous volcanos, producing all the various effects of volcanic mountains, and in particular with one, *Stromboli*, which is in a state of continual agitation, and enjoys not a moment of calmness or tranquillity.

On approaching the *Lipari* isles, they exhibit an austere and menacing aspect. They are eleven in number, and are named as follow: *Lipari*, *Volcano*, *Salini*, *Panaria*, *Bazozzo*, *Lisca-nera*, *Lisca-bianca*, *Datolo*, *Stromboli*, *Alicuda*, and *Felicuda*. They were called by the ancients the *Æolian*, but at the present day they are better known by that of the *Lipari* isles.

Although it was not in our power to disembark and visit these isles, yet we cannot refrain from inserting some particulars respecting them, chiefly drawn from the work of *M. de Dolomieu*, who wrote about forty years since. This celebrated *French* naturalist commences his account with the one nearest to *Sicily*, the isle of *Volcano*, which is near half a mile in height, and about twelve in circumference; it is in the form of a cone, and extremely steep on both sides.

The different observations made by *M. de Dolomieu*, and especially the great sound produced by some blows of a hammer, proved that there was only a very slight covering over this immense abyss. The declivity of the mountain is very great, and is wholly covered with loose cinders, which render the access to its summit of more difficulty than is experienced in ascending the majestic *Etna*.

The crater of this volcano does not occupy exactly the centre of the cone; it is placed a little towards the south, and before reaching the summit, there is a level area about sixty paces wide, in which are many apertures that communicate directly with its interior. These cavities are lined with sulphur, and constantly give vent to a stream of white, thick, and almost suffocating smoke: and doubtless the black vitreous lava observable on this side proceeded from them. This species of vitreous lava being more frequently met with in the *Lipari* isles than upon *Etna* or *Vesuvius*, almost proves, that the fire which produces them must be in greater activity; it is extremely hard, and the silex which forms one of its component parts, being placed in contact with brick, immediately produces fire.

From this level area there is a pathway leading to the mouth of the most magnificent, or rather the most terrific crater; and in order not to weaken the description, we shall insert the picture of it in the exact words of *M. de Dolomieu*.

“ C'est une excavation qui a la forme exact d'un entonnoir, dont l'ouverture seroit un peu ovale; sa profondeur est à-peu-près égale à la hauteur de la nouvelle montagne, c'est-à-dire quelle peut être d'un mille; son plus grand diamètre me parut d'un demi-mille, et son moindre diamètre de quatre cents cinquante pas; elle est terminée dans le fond par une petite plaine, qui peut avoir cinquante pas de diamètre; la pente des parois intérieures est extrêmement roide, de manière qu'il seroit impossible de descendre dans le fond, quand même on n'auroit pas le risque du feu à courir. D'ailleurs qu'y gagneroit, et qu'y verroit-on de plus? Cette vaste cavité est très-régulière, elle ne dérobe à l'œil rien de ce qu'elle contient, et j'avoue qu'elle fut pour moi un des spectacles les plus grands et les plus imposans que la nature m'eût encore présenté. Ce crater fait une impression plus vive sur l'imagination que celui de *l'Etna*, qui est beaucoup plus vaste, mais moins

profond et moins régulier. Je restai très-long-temps à admirer celui-ci, et à faire rouler dans l'intérieur de grosses pierres que je trouvai sur les lèvres, et dont la chute par la roideur de la pente, après avoir produit dans le fond un très-grand bruit, faisoit retentir et frémir la montagne; elles entraînoient avec elles des soufres sublimés et attachés aux pierres de l'intérieur de cet entonnoir: ces pierres, en arrivant dans la petite plaine, paroissent s'enfoncer dans une fluide, et je vis alors avec ma lunette que ce fond contenoit deux espèces de petits lacs, que je jugeai être pleins de soufre fondu, que je voyois couler sans cesse des parois contre lesquels il s'étoit sublimé; car je ne puis croire qu'il y ait de l'eau dans cette plaine brûlante, elle y seroit à l'instant réduite en vapeur*."

* " It is an excavation in the form of a funnel, having a mouth rather oval; its profundity is nearly equal to the height of the mountain, that is to say, about a thousand paces: the greatest diameter appeared about five hundred, and the less four hundred and fifty; it is terminated in the bottom by a little plain having a diameter of fifty; and the slope of the interior face is so extremely craggy and steep, as to render it impossible to descend, even if there were no risk of fire. Besides, what would be gained? or what should we discover more? This vast cavity is very regular, and I confess that it was the grandest and most imposing

M. de Dolomieu, after having examined the different stones which surrounded this volcano, descended from the summit: he met with many fissures, out of which issued a continual smoke, accompanied by a strong sulphurous exhalation, and the impression of internal fires being the principle and source of these wonderful phenomena were visible even to the sea, where the sand, although covered with water, preserved a great degree of heat. There are places round the island where the sea itself is so warm, that it is hardly possible to retain it within the hand.

In the immediate vicinity of this island, and

spectacle nature had ever presented to my view. This crater made a more lively impression upon the imagination than that of *Etna*, which, although much more extensive, is still less profound and less regular. I remained some time admiring this crater, and rolling down the interior large stones, whose fall from the steepness of the slope produced a great noise; they gathered as they fell sulphur that was attached to the interior of this crater. These stones on arriving in the little plain appeared to enter a fluid, and I distinctly perceived with my telescope that there were two small lakes, which I judged to be full of sublimated sulphur, that ran continually from the sides: it was impossible to suppose they were composed of water, because such a fluid would be instantaneously converted into vapour."

more particularly in the N. E. part where the disembarkation was effected, bubbles of air continually rise out of the sea, which on arriving at its surface, immediately break : they greatly resemble those which are produced by the boiling of water. *Pliny* and *Strabo* speak of this ebullition, and attribute it to the extreme heat of the contiguous volcanos ; but *M. de Dolomieu*, however, thinks on the contrary, that this strange phenomenon may with more reason arise from the fixed air, which is produced in great abundance, especially during the periods of internal fermentation.

Lipari is situated about a mile to the north-east of *Volcano*, and is about eighteen miles in circumference : the canal or strait which separates them is very deep. This island is extremely irregular in form as well as surface, and contains several insulated mountains composed of various strata. The different stones and strata of earth present such a variety of features, as to create a considerable doubt as to the cause of their original formation : some of the stones having the appearance of silex, while others are wholly calcareous ; in a word, every thing is so opposite and contradictory, as to confuse the most able naturalist : even *M. de*

Dolomieu employed two days before he was satisfied that the island was of volcanic production.

One of the many phenomena which indicate the present agency of fire, is the heat subsisting in their *sudatorii*, or species of stoves; in some of them this heat is so great, as to render it wholly impossible to enter. These *sudatorii*, which are about five feet square, and rather more in height, are formed in the rocks towards the west, and in a part extremely steep: a strong sulphureous odour points out their respective situations, and from fissures in the rocks immediately near them issue continually burning vapours which assume the form of a dense smoke.

These stoves, although formed in a very primitive manner, would be salutary in many disorders; but they are so extremely inconvenient, so devoid of every thing necessary, that they are but seldom frequented; in fact, it is rather difficult to obtain accommodation in the island. The vapours with which they are penetrated are humid, and they vary occasionally in their temperature, experiencing all the vicissitudes of volcanos.

About three hundred feet above these stoves is a source of water, whose heat is very great, which produces a supply sufficient to work three mills; from this stream arises a smoke of an extremely dense nature, and the water retains its heat for some time after putting the wheels of these mills in motion: the inhabitants use it, when cold, for domestic purposes, there being no other spring in the island. This stream is supposed to have some connexion with the hot baths, which were well known to the ancients, who used them as well for pleasure and voluptuousness, as for curing maladies of various kinds; at the present moment, however, they are deserted for the same reason as has been before mentioned, the want of proper establishments for the accommodation of invalids. It is incontestable, from the nature of the productions with which the isle of *Lipari* is so abundantly covered, as well as from the component parts of the several mountains, that it is of volcanic formation; and although the subterraneous fires are now apparently tranquil, very little would be sufficient to rekindle them in all their former violence and activity.

Judging from what the ancients have said concerning this island, we could not have con-

ceived that it was so abundantly fertile, especially in fruits, possessing the most delicious flavour. *Cicero* speaks of it as being wholly uncultivated, and perhaps from the violence of the fires, and the excessive fermentation the whole island then constantly experienced, it was less favourable to vegetation; but for a long time past it has been extremely fruitful, especially in the vine and fig. The culture of the former is the principal object of rural economy among the inhabitants, the conversion of the soil to this purpose being the most profitable to them: they require considerable attention, and are supported by a trellis or slight structure of laths, with a flat top or roof about three feet from the ground. To this trellis the vines attach and entwine their branches, and from the air having such free circulation, they are not only prevented from early decaying, but are likewise preserved from humidity: this mode of culture materially assists the grapes in hanging a sufficient time to arrive at full maturity.

The inhabitants of *Lipari* make several kinds of wine, all of excellent quality, especially one named *Malvoisie*, which is met with in perfection at *Naples*. The produce of the

greater part of the vines is, however, reserved for dry fruit, named *uva passa*, or in other words, raisins; and the method adopted for this purpose, is to place the grapes, when they are ripenèd, in an alkaline lie of ashes, more or less impregnated with salt, according to the maturity of the grape, and then, for the purpose of more effectually drying, they are exposed to the meridian sun. The object of this lie is to absorb the acidity of the fruit, in order that the luscious portion of the juice may be better enabled to crystallise itself, and thus become less liable to attract humidity. The fruit used for this purpose is of two sorts, the one rather small, of a dark colour, and without stones, these are the most delicate, and, consequently, are in the greatest demand; the other, rather of a yellowish cast, longer, and containing stones; these are called the ordinary raisin.

The population of the island amounts to nearly fourteen thousand persons, the far greater part occupying the town of *Lipari*, the capital of all the isles. This place is mean in its appearance, extremely ill-built, and situated close to the sea upon a cape of the same name, which is singularly and strongly fortified by its own natural position.

About two miles to the north-west of *Lipari* is the isle of *Salini*, which is nearly oval in form, and about twelve miles in circumference: its name is derived from some salt-pits on the shore towards the south-east, which furnish enough of this essential article for the consumption of the neighbouring islands. It contains three insulated mountains, which are elevated, and whose summits form as it were a triangle: and the valley situated between them is extremely fertile, greatly resembling the territory round the base of *Etna*. Although the formation of this island may certainly be attributed to fire, yet the volcanos have ceased to exist for many ages, as no poet, historian, or geographer of antiquity, have ever mentioned them: upon the summit of the mountains, however, traces of craters are still visible, as well as various currents of lava, which are hard, and resemble porphyry in their general composition, the grain being extremely fine, without any pores, and its colour rather of a reddish cast, spangled with numerous white spots.

From the summit of the highest mountain in *Salini* may be clearly distinguished two other islands, *Alicuda* and *Felicuda*, situated about ten and fifteen miles more to the westward:

the one and the other composed of a single mountain, about ten miles in circumference. These isles contain but few inhabitants, whose occupation consists chiefly in cultivating the vine.

The isle of *Panaria*, which is next in succession, particularly deserves notice, from a discovery made by *M. de Dolomieu*, which appears infinitely curious, and seems to have escaped the attention of preceding naturalists. This isle, according to all appearances, was the *Evonymos* of the ancients, and is about eight miles in circumference: it presents on a first inspection the appearance of a simple mountain, and is of less elevation than the neighbouring isles; but on a more close examination of the side towards the south-east, it presents a kind of circular face or segment of an arc, which the neighbouring isles, *Basiluzzo*, *Lisca-bianca*, *Lisca-nera*, and *Datolo*, likewise possess, and form together, as is shewn in the accompanying plan*, an irregular circle, diverging as it were from one common centre. *M. de Dolomieu* does not hesitate to assert, that this little archipelago is the remains or

* Vide page 280.

detached portions of a vast crater, whose aperture now lies concealed in the bosom of the mighty waters, and which was more extensive than any at present existing in this part of the globe.

Independently of the peculiar form of these islands, there is also a great similarity in all their component parts, and the whole of them are certainly of volcanic origin, inasmuch as they bear evident marks of fire: and as experience proves that all volcanic mountains are formed by their own natural eruptions, so, consequently, there must be a crater out of which the matter must have been emitted. There is nothing, however, in these isles which in the least indicates the existence of one, and therefore this additional circumstance tends materially to confirm the opinion entertained by *M. de Dolomieu*.

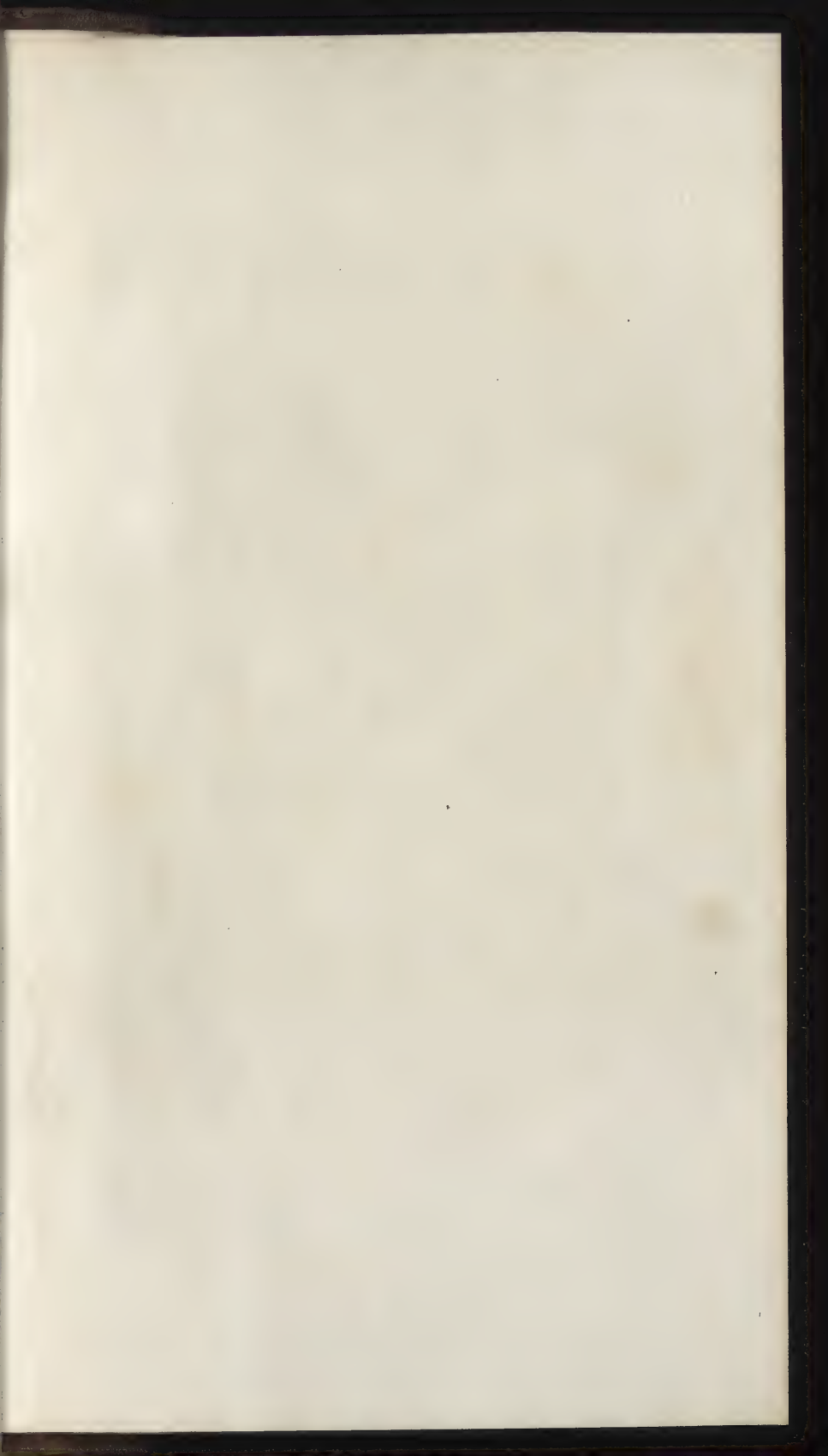
This observation, absolutely new upon the form and nature of their construction, satisfactorily explains the reason why ancient authors, when speaking of the *Æolian* isles, mention only seven, consequently this little archipelago must then have been united, and formed one island. A slight sketch, shewing the par-

ticular situation of these isles, is introduced for the purpose of more fully illustrating these remarks.



The only part of the isle *Panaria* which is inhabited is the valley in the interior face: it is extremely fertile, and contains about three hundred persons, whose sole occupation consists in the culture of the vine and cotton.

Stromboli is situated to the north-east of the other isles, and about fifteen miles distant from





J. Clark sculp.

The Island of STROMBOLI.

Panaria. *M. de Dolomieu* arrived in the vicinity during the silence and obscurity of night, which enabled him fully to enjoy this most superb spectacle of nature. We may also observe, that as our brig was becalmed for two days and nights among these islands, we passed the latter upon deck, contemplating this wonderful and interesting phenomenon. We shall not, however, presume to offer a description of this beautiful, and at the same time terrific scene, but introduce a slight view of it, together with the account given by *M. de Dolomieu* in his own words, in order not to diminish the force of his rich and glowing style.

“ Je m’en approchai pendant la nuit, avec d’autant plus d’empressement, et j’observai ses différens phénomènes avec d’autant plus d’attention, que je savois que la clarté du jour me priveroit d’une partie des circonstances intéressantes de ce singulier volcan. Le crater enflammé est dans la partie du nord-ouest de l’isle, sur le flanc de la montagne. Je lui vis lancer pendant toute cette nuit, par intervalles réglés de sept à huit minutes, des pierres enflammées, qui s’élevoient à plus de cent pieds de hauteur, qui formoient des rayons un peu divergens, mais dont cependant la majeure

quantité retomboit dans le crater qui les avoit lancées ; les autres rouloient jusques dans le mer. Chaque explosion étoit accompagnée d'une bouffée de flammes rouges, semblables à celle que l'on produit dans nos spectacles par le moyen du camphre et de l'esprit-de-vin ; cette flamme duroit quelquefois quatre ou cinq minutes, et s'éteignoit tout-d'un-coup. Un bruit sourd semblable à celui d'une mine qui éprouve peu de résistance, se faisoit entendre, mais il n'arrivoit à l'oreille que quelque temps après l'explosion, et quoiqu'il en fût l'effet, il en paroissoit indépendant. Les pierres lancées ont une couleur d'un rouge vif, et sont étincelantes, elles font l'effet des feux d'artifice*."

* " I approached *Stromboli* during the night, with so much the more eagerness, and observed its different phenomena with so much the more attention, knowing that the clearness of day would deprive me of some interesting particulars of this singular volcano. The enflamed crater is situated in that part of the isle which is towards the north-west upon the flank of the mountain. I observed it emit during the night, at regular intervals of about seven or eight minutes, stones, which elevated themselves to the height of one hundred feet, forming rays a little diverging ; the greater number of these stones, however, returned into the crater which had emitted them, while the remainder rolled into the sea. Every explosion was accompanied with a mass of flame, somewhat similar to that produced in our

This isle in form is perfectly conical, which, no doubt, was the cause of the ancients calling it *Strongyle*; this name has since been converted into its modern appellation of *Stromboli*. The isle is terminated by two summits of different heights, very steep, and is about twelve miles in circumference; it affords only one place where a landing may be effected, and that is situated towards the north-east, where the base is prolonged, and presents rather the appearance of an inclined plane. This little plain or valley is the only part susceptible of culture, and produces excellent fruits and some cotton, the exchange of which procures subsistence for about two hundred persons, who live like so many salamanders in perfect security, although constantly exposed to eruptions immediately over their heads.

Stromboli is the only volcano known which maintains an incessant activity, and the manner

theatres by means of camphor and spirits of wine: this flame continues about four or five minutes, and then becomes suddenly extinct. A loud noise is heard some time after each explosion, and although the effect, it appears wholly independent. The stones thrown out are of a sparkling red colour, and produce a similar effect to that of artificial fireworks."

of its explosions has no resemblance with other volcanos: ordinarily they are announced by a subterraneous noise, the *avant-coureur* of an eruption, and generally preceded by clouds of thick smoke mingled with flame: on the contrary, the eruptions of this singularly formed mountain take place at certain regular intervals; and from the summit which overlooks this enflamed crater, the exact period between each may be accurately ascertained; it is about seven minutes. From the superior light of the sun, no flame is visible during the day, only a thick white smoke, which soon vanishes in the atmosphere. The stones emitted from this volcano, when seen at night, are of a bright and lively red, but by day they appear perfectly black: the various matters being elevated perpendicularly, the greater part of course return into the crater; this may serve to explain why men are found so courageous as to inhabit this island.

We learn that the ancients placed the palace of *Æolus* in the isle of *Stromboli*, and the forges of *Vulcan* in that of *Lipari*, which latter was considered under the immediate protection of this deity. Ancient medallions incontestibly prove this circumstance, many of them bearing

an impression of the god covered with a coarse kind of helmet, and representing on the reverse, sometimes two, three, or six balls wholly unconnected, and sometimes two united by a bar, similar in every respect to the chain-shot of the present day.

After passing the second night in the vicinity of *Stromboli*, and again beholding it in all its terrific grandeur, a favourable breeze sprung up, which soon enabled our vessel to make the *Neapolitan* coast near the gulf of *Salerno*. We now enjoyed some of the most beautiful landscapes, consisting of the romantic scenery encircling this gulf, backed by the receding mountains of the *Apennines*, which presented themselves under the most enchanting forms. As we progressively advanced over the surface of the deep, these extensive and magnificent prospects of course experienced constant changes, thus producing a succession of interesting views, not unworthy the pencil of a *Claude*.

Having passed the gulf, and doubled the promontory, *Punta della Campanella*, we majestically entered the delightful bay of *Naples*, having on one side this bold cape, and on the other the isle of *Capri*. As we opened the bay, it dis-

played itself decked with so many and such great beauties, as induced us unhesitatingly to exclaim, that it was decidedly superior to the highly extolled views of the mighty *Lisbon*, the superb *Genoa*, the fascinating *Palermo*, or the noble *Messina*.

The strait between the promontory and the island, a distance of three miles, forms the southern entrance to this bay, and the island is so situated, as most effectually to supply the place of a mole, equally so with that stupendous undertaking, the breakwater at *Plymouth Sound*: it lies almost parallel with the city of *Naples*, and seems as if planted for the purpose of breaking the violence of the waves; consequently it contributes very materially to the security of the harbour.

Virgil, in describing his *Libyan* harbour, has given such a faithful portrait of the bay of *Naples*, that we cannot resist the pleasure of introducing it.

“ Est in secessu longo locus : Insula portum
Efficit objectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto
Frangitur, inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos :
Hinc atque hinc vastæ rupes geminique minantur
In cœlum scopuli, quorum sub vertice latè

Æquora tuta silent; tum silvis scena coruscis
Desuper, horrentique atrum nemus imminet umbrâ."

" Within a long recess there lies a bay,
An island shades it from the rolling sea,
And forms a port secure for ships to ride :
Broke by the jutting land on either side,
In double streams the briny waters glide
Between two rows of rocks; a silvan scene
Appears above, and groves for ever green."

DRYDEN.

We now approached the interior of the harbour, sailing majestically on the smooth surface of the azure deep, and enjoying the undescribably beautiful amphitheatre of *Naples*, and its charming environs, heightened by the rich purple glow of the evening sun; and having at length reached the spot where vessels generally anchor, we were soon visited by some officers of police, who stated that our disembarkation must be deferred till the morrow, it being then too late to effect such a purpose. This was exceedingly fortunate, as it enabled us to witness from the sea the splendid illumination of the city, which occurred this evening on account of the restoration of King *Ferdinand* to his ancient throne.

All round the bay, *Naples* seemed to rise

from the silent darkness like a radiant crown of light; and high above the rest, apparently in the air, stood, pre-eminently conspicuous, the castle of *San Elmo*, spreading its wide resplendent rays over the dark blue sea. Independently of these artificial beauties, those of nature likewise assumed more than their ordinary appearance; the cloudless lustre of the full moon, accompanied by innumerable stars, shed a celestial gleam upon the silvery bosom of the deep; while the neighbouring capes and islands, the majestic mountains, and more especially the misty *Vesuvius*, appeared enveloped in the most agreeable and seductive shades of night.

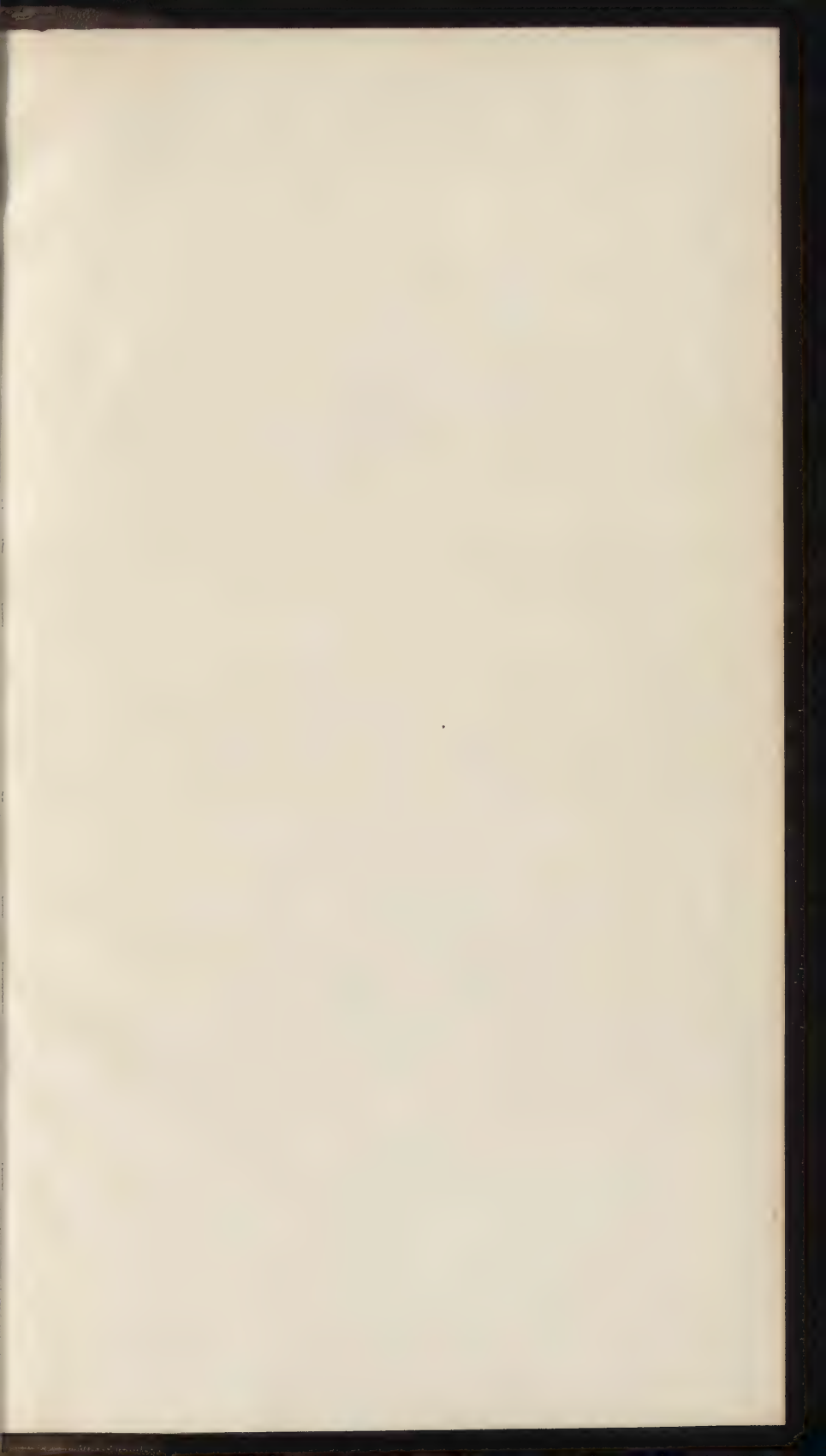
As may be supposed, the splendour of the illumined city, the delicious fineness of the night, the balsamic softness of the air, and above all, the confusion occasioned by upwards of fifty persons being busily occupied in preparing to quit this wretched vessel, prevented any one from reposing. The author, therefore, anxiously awaited upon deck the arrival of fair *Aurora*, and her attendant nymphs: as this goddess gradually approached, the "cloud capped" *Vesuvius* began to appear, more and more distinct, and as the

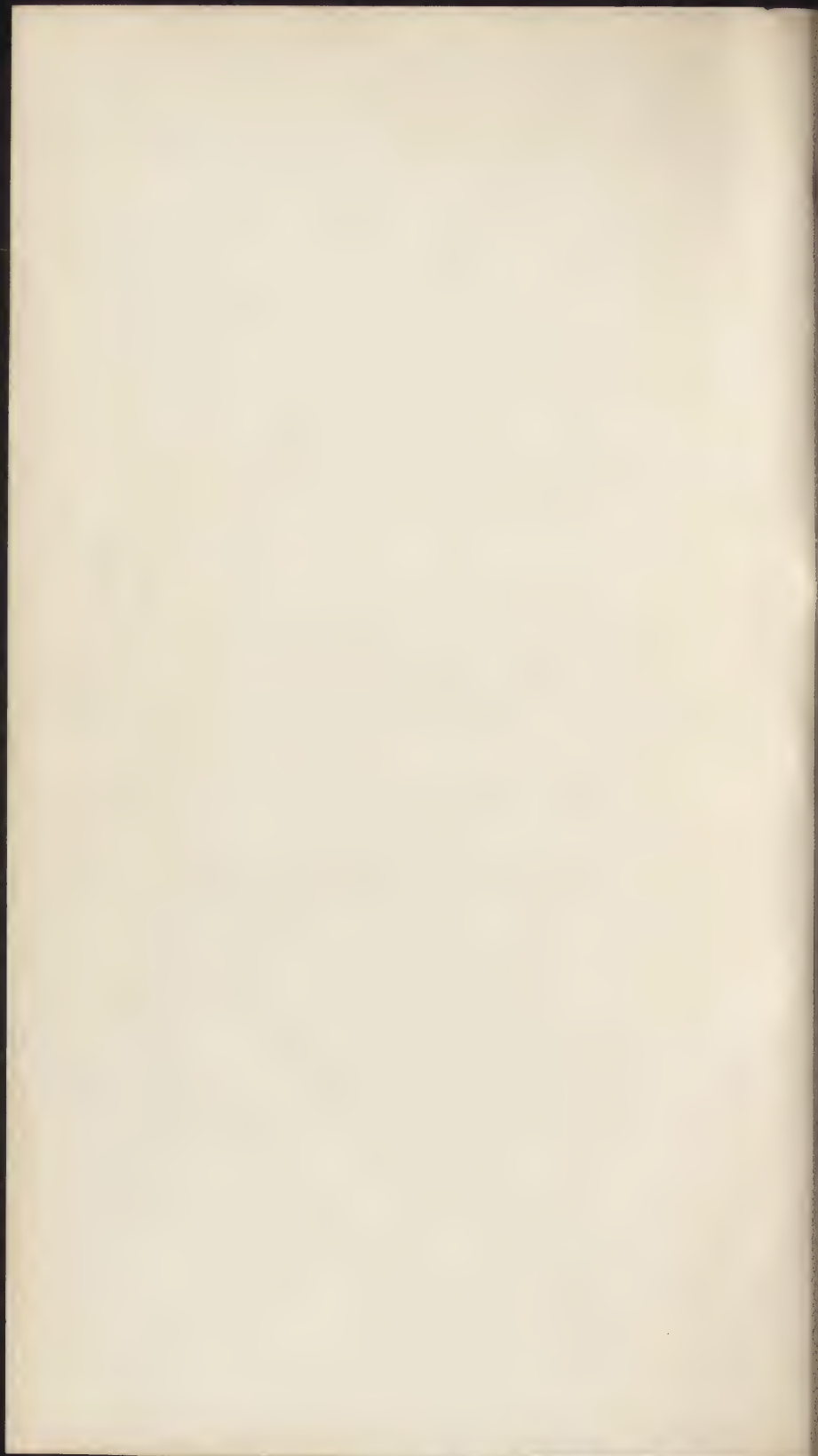
dew exhaled from off the earth, a succession of landscapes of such surprising magnificence and beauty presented themselves, as were altogether of a nature too sublime for language to describe.

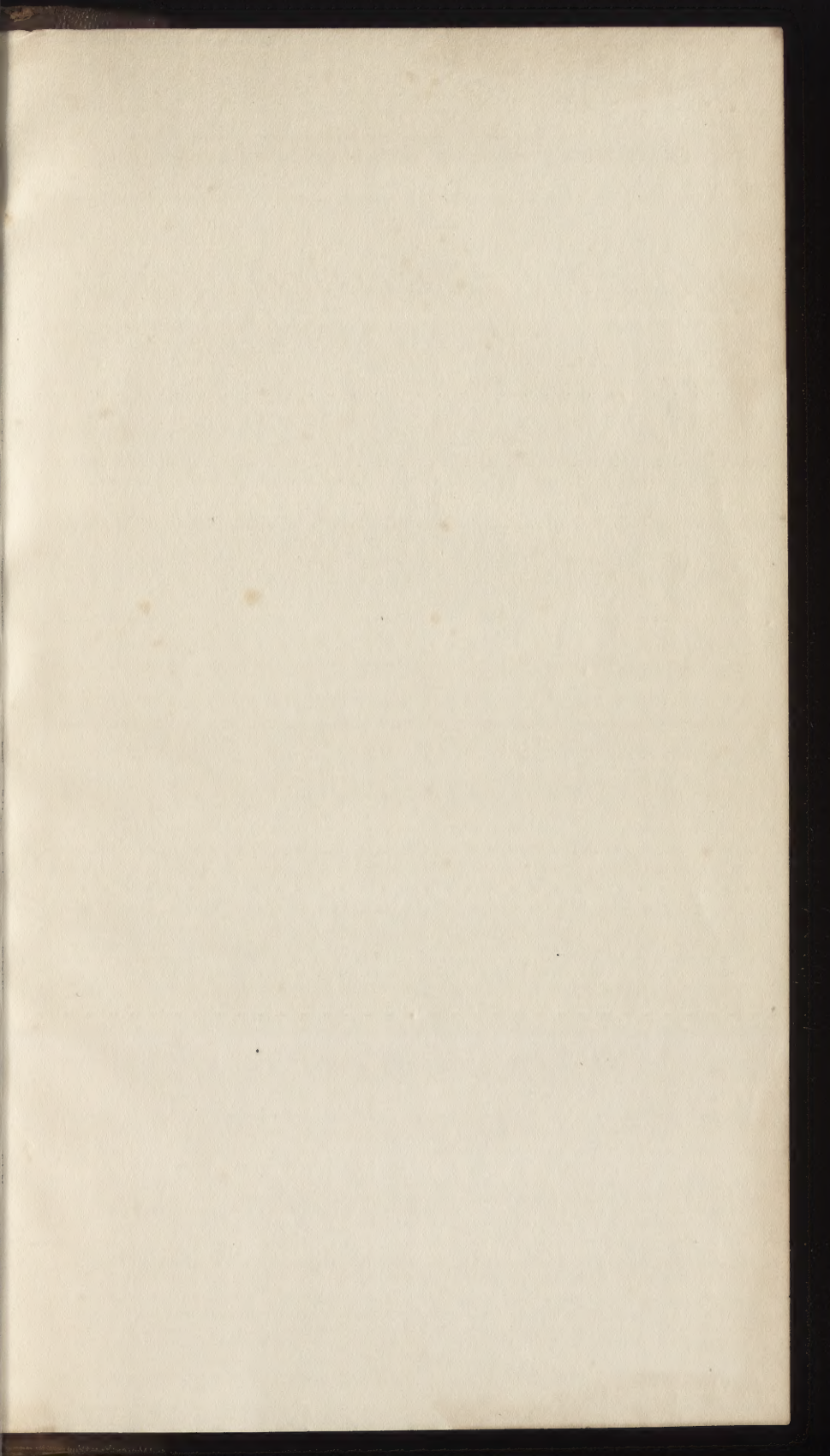
The author now respectfully bids adieu to his readers, not with the proverbial saying of the country, "*Vedete Napoli e poi morire!*" see *Naples* and die; but rather enthusiastically exclaiming, behold *Naples* and live! "*Vedete Napoli e poi vivere!*"

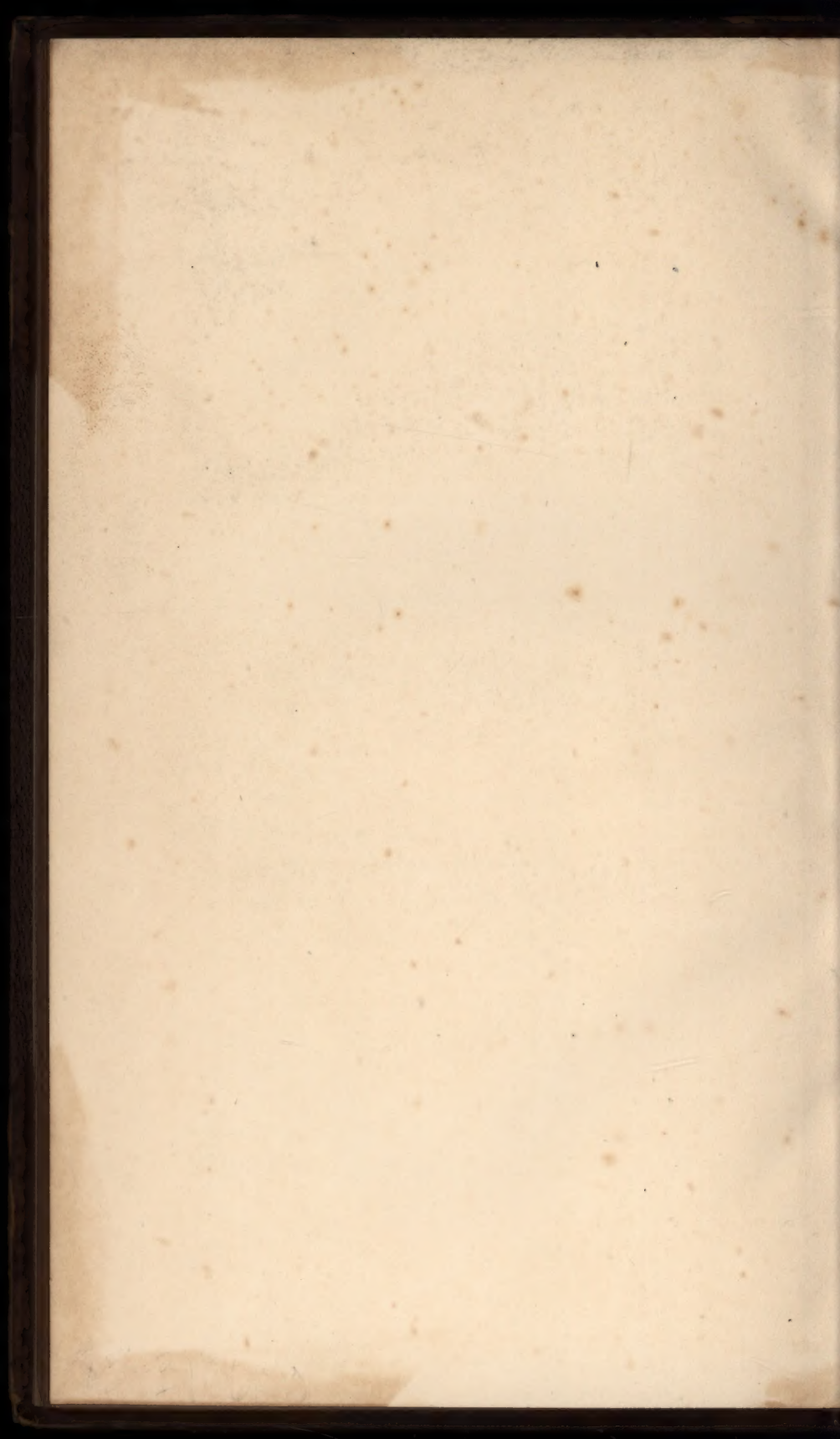
THE END.

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